APR - 1 1934

The New Statesman and Nation, March 3, 1934

THE NEW

STATESMAN AND NATION

The Week-end Review

Vol. VII. No. 158 (New Series) **SATURDAY, MARCH 3, 1934** [Registered at the G.P.O. as a newspaper] **SIXPENCE**

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

DIMITROV is free; and Göring's threats have proved empty. A brave man has triumphed over bullying and injustice. It was the energy and courage of Dimitrov's defence that procured the acquittal and freedom of himself and his comrades, since, without it, the international storm, which Hitler could not afford to disregard, would not have arisen. The result is a great encouragement to the depressed forces of reason and justice in Europe. Decent opinion does still count. Something can be done if we stand up to Fascism. So far as Germany is concerned, the next task is to procure the release of Torgler. To rouse international opinion against cruelty and injustice is all that private individuals abroad can do to combat German Fascism; in England their task is to prevent the growth of Fascism. From the tone of the Government spokesman in the House of Lords discussion on "political uniforms," it would seem that a great deal of pressure must be exercised by all peaceable people if official action is to be taken.

The Hunger March

The story of the hunger marchers is typical of English political habits. A great deal of middle-class panic; warnings to shop-keepers to bar their windows; a gathering of police outnumbering the demonstrators; a perfectly orderly demonstration; a letter from the Prime Minister amounting to an insult; a revolt from the Labour Party; an intervention from Sir Herbert Samuel and a few of his colleagues who seemed suddenly to remember the traditions of Liberalism and that to deny hunger marchers their civil rights was to justify, not to discredit, Communism; finally, an amicable reception, with tea and toast, of about a hundred marchers by their Parliamentary representatives in the smoke-rooms of the House. A protest, a compromise, a charming ending. And no one a step nearer to a solution of the problem. But it is well for a working class protest to be made against the Government's unemployment policy, and the fact that the protest was organised by Communists made not the slightest difference to the fact that it was an expression of real hardship. The absurdity is that the Labour Party should have left it to Communists to organise and that it should send a circular to Trades Councils discountenancing the march. Actually, the marchers were almost everywhere greeted and entertained by the Trades Councils and the local Labour people, and the effect of the official Labour Party's attitude was to make it look uncommonly like the German Social Democratic Party which lost its hold largely because it became too "official" and lost touch with the rank and file of the movement.

Mr. Eden's Voyages

Mr. Eden has now travelled to Paris from Berlin by way of Rome, seeking agreement, disarmament, and peace. He carries a good many albatrosses round his neck, the parting gifts of Sir John Simon and Mr. MacDonald, and it is to be feared that he has acquired a few more in Berlin. Mr. Eden, it will be remembered, went to Berlin to try to obtain Herr Hitler's agreement to the British memorandum on disarmament. When we went to press last week he was stepping into the train which was to take him to Rome, and our newspapers were informing their readers that his conversations in Berlin had been very useful and that he had got on very well with Herr Hitler. We ventured to interpret these reports as meaning in fact "nothing doing" in Berlin. By the time Mr. Eden's train had arrived in Rome our interpretation had proved to be correct. The Sunday papers reported that the German attitude had created a "deplorable impression" in London. Apparently the German demands left no loophole for any measure of disarmament, and Herr Hitler stands with General Göring in claiming that Germany must have an air force considerably larger than that of Great Britain. Having received this pleasant gift from the German Leader, Mr. Eden betook himself for comfort to the Italian Duce. Once more the first reports are all roses. The 1½ hours' conversation revealed that Signor Mussolini and Mr. Eden were in complete accord as to the objects to be reached and the possibility of an agreement. Reading between the lines, we interpret this to mean that our Government are abandoning the pretence of working for even the meagre proposals of their own memorandum, and will fall back on the original Italian proposals which would "limit armaments at their existing level." This would, of course, entail the complete rearmament of Germany. That is the albatross which, apparently, Mr. Eden has acquired in Rome; it will not be enthusiastically welcomed when he brings it to Paris.

Manœuvres of the Powers

Mr. Eden's travels and conversations, it is well to remember, are only incidents in a series of much more important manœuvres and negotiations which are now going on behind the scenes. The Great Powers, having abandoned or sterilised the League system, are now engaged in the preliminary operations necessary for building up a system of armed alliances similar to that which existed before the war and produced it. As in the years 1900 to 1913, so to-day, one important pivot upon which such hostile alliances have to be built lies in the Balkans. That is what makes the precarious position of Austria at the present moment a crucial question between Germany, Italy, the Little Entente, and France. The German offensive against Austrian independence has already begun to drive a wedge between Hitler and Mussolini. The alternatives are a German-Austrian-Hungarian bloc or an Italian-Austrian-Hungarian bloc dominating the Balkans. The visit of Signor Suvich to Budapest and Vienna, the discussion of closer economic relations between Hungary, Austria, and Italy, the kites which are being flown with regard to the return of the Habsburgs, are all stages in a single process of manœuvring for position. The process will be carried a stage farther when General Gömbös and Dr. Dollfuss pay their visit to Mussolini in the middle of this month. Unfortunately it is not Mr. Eden's negotiations, but the final form of these armed alliances, which will determine the exact dimensions of the armaments race that we shall soon be witnessing in Europe.

The Struggle in Austria

The Nazi ultimatum to Austria expired on Wednesday; but there was no hostile movement from the German side of the frontier. It appears that Herr Habicht, the so-called "Inspector for Austria," is being held in leash, for the present, by the German Government. Herr Hitler can afford to wait—and indeed would be mad to rush things—however impatient his Austrian friends may be. Inside Austria there have been some minor disturbances, particularly at Innsbruck, where the Nazis on Wednesday night lit up the mountains with swastikas of fire and bombarded the town with smoke bombs. Meanwhile the process of *Gleichschaltung* goes ahead rapidly. The provincial diets of Upper Austria and the Tirol are dissolved, and plenary powers have been conferred on the Governors. Salzburg has gone, and Carinthia is going, the same way. It is no doubt easy, once you have crushed the forces of democracy, to organise your political dictatorship. But Dr. Dollfuss is faced with the double task of maintaining himself against other would be dictators and—if he is successful in that—of making the Austrian "Corporative State" work economically.

Cabinet Rumours

With the hearty assistance of the popular press, the Prime Minister has got all the publicity he could have wanted—and a good deal more—for his Cabinet reconstruction plans. The trouble began over Sir John Simon. His departure from the Foreign Office would break no hearts. But where is he to go to? The suggestion (by unauthorised persons) of the Home Office, as a post where he might be less complaisant to Communists and Fascists than he was to the Japanese, appears to have annoyed him. The woolsack might be acceptable. Lord Halifax (better known as Lord Irwin) should be a decided improvement as Foreign Secretary; the rival tip—Lord Hailsham—does not appeal to us. But Sir John is only the first in the rumoured game of general post. Is there to be a Minister of Housing, who will relieve Sir Hilton Young of a job in which he has cut so poor a figure? Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, Sir Godfrey Collins, the Secretary for Scotland—and even Sir Henry Betterton, the Minister of Labour—might be "kicked upstairs," it is said; but their successors have not yet been predicted. Finally, there is the Prime Minister himself, who is reported to be very worried over the whole business and anxious to resign. That he is worried we believe, that he hankers after resignation we do not. For the rest, we shall wait and see—and we may have to wait some time.

The U.S.A. Codes

General Johnson's long-heralded conference on the future of the industrial codes under the N.R.A. began in Washington this week. His opening address certainly showed no sign of any intention to relax the code system; on the contrary, insistence was laid on the need for more stringent enforcement in order to make possible further reductions in hours and increases in wages. Promises

were made that the codes would be amended so as to provide further safeguards against monopoly, in the interests both of the consumer and of the small business; but no detailed suggestions about the method of doing these things are yet to hand. At the same time, active steps are being taken to push American foreign trade, especially in agricultural products, through the new credit institutions which are being set up to finance export trade to Russia and also to Cuba and other American countries. In connection with this news, which seems to mean a shift away from the idea of a self-sufficient economy, President Roosevelt is expected to make during the next few days proposals for a revision of tariff policy, possibly involving an attempt to apply quota arrangements over a larger field. If rumours speak truth, the present tendency is to put first the object of disposing of the agricultural surplus, and to relax industrial protection in order to secure this. If this is so, there should be a brisk tussle ahead both in and out of Congress in the immediate future.

The Unemployment Debate

There is a fantastic absurdity about the committee stage of the Unemployment Insurance Bill. Under the guillotine procedure, clause after clause is being hustled through without debate. This week the Means Test clauses have been passed without any opportunity of considering its principles. Under the time-table procedure the Chairman of the Committee was set an impossible task. If he allowed details to be debated, there could be no time to discuss principles; and if he selected amendments on points of principle, all the amendments of detail were bound to go by default. He chose to sacrifice the principles in favour of the details. But the consequence is a widespread demand not merely for a prolonged discussion on report, but also for the recommittal of a large part of the Bill. The House of Commons, as it is now organised, is a wholly unsuitable body for dealing with a complicated measure of this sort; but to leave the details undiscussed means giving the Government a free hand. The need for a drastic revision of procedure could not be more plainly shown. Within the present unsatisfactory conditions, however, the Government have already yielded a little to the pressure of a section of their own supporters as well as the Opposition, and it is not improbable that they will raise the dependent children's allowance under Part I to 3*s*.

A New Housing Bill?

There are persistent rumours that the Government is contemplating another Housing Bill after all. With these are linked other rumours about the supplanting of Sir Hilton Young from the Ministry of Health; or that he is to remain there but that a separate Ministry of Housing is to be set up, or that there is to be an Assistant Minister to take charge of housing alone. A new and really serious Housing Bill is obviously needed. No less obviously, we cannot expect a good Housing Bill from Sir Hilton Young. There is a strong case for removing housing lock, stock and barrel from the Ministry of Health, which possesses an administrative tradition, derived from the old Local Government Board, ill suited to handling the problems of housing and town-planning in the right way. It would be of little use to put a subordinate Minister in charge of housing if he had still to work through the present purblind and totally inadequate headquarters machine. We would very much sooner see housing handed over completely to the Office of Works, which has the nucleus of a staff possessing the right sort of experience, and could break clean away from the L.G.B. tradition, which comes down ultimately from the Poor Law Board. It will be an agreeable surprise, however, if the reasonable solution is adopted. In default of it, a subordinate department on the lines of the Department of Mines could be an advance on the present position.

De Valera and the Blue Shirts

The introduction of Mr. De Valera's Bill to proscribe the wearing of blue shirts or other emblems of private armies masquerading as political parties has not done, and probably will not do, much to ease or clarify the confused internal situation in Ireland. General O'Duffy's Blue Shirts, now rechristened innocently The League of Youth, mustered in force this week at Kildare in full uniform to hear their leader damn the President's Bill. The Civic Guards had to beat off considerable bodies of the General's opponents, and it was only their truncheons which finally established order and secured the General a hearing. Ireland, like so many other countries, is suffering from a struggle, partly concealed, between the forces which stand for Fascism and those which still stand for the forms and institutions of democracy. The forces of reaction have not so far made much progress, for the Irish masses seem to regard the would be Fascists as something of a freak party, like the Camelots du Roi, supported by the mischievous rich in order to annoy good republican democrats. Mr. De Valera's real danger is that he has alienated a large section of republicans and democrats, the hand of the Government and the police continually coming down even more heavily upon the heads of those on the Left, its would be supporters, than upon the heads of its reactionary opponents. In these circumstances the combined reactionaries might possibly succeed in a coup against divided republicanism.

A Clerical Campaign

An interesting item in the reactionary strategy is the clerical campaign against "Socialism" and social reform. Clerical propagandists tour the country to explain that the fruits of Socialism have been the murder of two million workers, not to speak of countless priests, some of whom have been frozen under ice and crucified. Under such inspiration young men of the Catholic associations burned down two Labour Educational centres, one at Abbey Street in Dublin and another in Leitrim. A curious feature in this campaign has been the frequent mention of a godless pamphlet which is being broadcast through the post from England. The document purports to be issued by an "Irish Workers Republican Atheist Birth Control Civil and Industrial Emancipation Alliance, New York." We understand that inquiries by Republican and Socialist groups in Ireland and New York have discovered no such "Alliance" in either country, and they are convinced that it emanates from England. It would be interesting to discover the agency which is printing and distributing this astonishing document.

All MSS. and letters should be addressed to the Editor, at 10 *Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.*2. *The postage on this issue is: Inland,* 1*d.; Foreign,* 1½*d.; Canada,* 1*d.*

SAVING THE RATES

THE elections for the county councils will be held next week, and we shall doubtless hear the usual tale of apathy and low polls. The reason for that is not that democracy is dead; it is that, in large areas of the country, democracy has never had a chance. The county council and its doings are generally remote from the man in the street or the man on the farm, and the Labour Party has not the resources to put up any effective fight against the entrenched forces of wealth and privilege. There are exceptions, of course, in the highly industrialised regions, such as the West Riding or Durham, and in London, which is in reality a huge county borough rather than a county in the ordinary sense. Yet even in London the citizens do not jostle each other at the polling booths; at the last L.C.C. election, in 1931, less than 30 per cent. of the electorate voted. There should be a heavier poll than that next Thursday; and the London Labour Party are confident that, even if they do not return in a majority, they will add substantially to their numbers. It will be for the most part a straight fight between them and the Municipal Reformers. The old Progressive Party is now a name and a shadow; in a few constituencies there are Liberals with no M.R. opponents, in some they are running in double harness with the M.R.s, and in some others there will be three-cornered contests. But the great mass of Progressive votes of former days has now gone to the Left or to the Right.

The issues at this election are simple enough; indeed, they boil down to one—saving the rates or Socialism. The attack on the Co-operative Societies is a red-herring. Lord Beaverbrook has cajoled or hectored a number of the Municipal Reform candidates into this folly, and some of the more unscrupulous of them have gone so far as to make the statement—promptly repudiated by Mr. Herbert Morrison as "a deliberate lie"—that the Labour Party's policy is to give all contracts to the Co-ops. and exclude private traders from tendering to the Council. But others, including Mr. Webbe, the leader-designate of the Municipal Reformers, refuse to take part in a mean and childish campaign which promises no advantage either to the people of London or to the M.R. Party. The real concern of the reactionaries is, of course, "economy." Some of them call this efficiency; others, scorning such euphemisms, boast frankly of "saving the rates" as though that were the supreme virtue in elected persons and the prime object of local government.

We have before us two leaflets issued by the "London Municipal Society," which are masterpieces in the art of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*. The "average rate" in London, we are told, has been brought down in the last twelve years from 15*s.* 3*d.* to 9*s.* 10*d.*—which means a "cumulative saving" of over £82,000,000 to the ratepayers. (These figures cover the rates levied not merely by the L.C.C., but by the Metropolitan Borough Councils and the Boards of Guardians; the county rate was 5*s.* 5*d.* in 1921–22, 3*s.* 10*d.* in 1929–30, and 6*s.* 3½*d.* in 1932–33—the rise being due to the transference of Poor Law functions to the L.C.C.) This wonderful result, it is stated, has been achieved by "rigid economy." No doubt it has—in part. But the Municipal Reformers do not particularise about the economies, which include the pinching of the social services wherever possible—and even such petty meannesses as the stopping of prizes in the schools. The fall in the rates, however, is due also, and to a far greater extent, to causes with which Municipal Reformers have had nothing whatever to do. They say nothing about the fall in the cost of living since 1921, or of the rise in the rateable value of London. But this is not all. To make the innocent reader's flesh creep, they set beside the 6*s.* 3½*d.* rate of the L.C.C. the 12*s.* 3*d.* of Monmouthshire and the 14*s.* 6*d.* of Durham, with no other comment than that these are counties under Labour-Socialist rule. What warrant is there for thus comparing like with unlike? The circumstances of Durham are utterly different from those of London; and in particular Durham is one of the principal areas of unemployment and distress. And whereas in London a penny rate produces £250,000, in Durham it produces only a little over £30,000. But what do trifles of this sort matter? Here are two sets of figures, and all we need do is to look at them and conclude that if the Labour Party gets into power in London, our rates will be doubled in three years!

But let us leave this chicanery, and test the rate-savers' policy by some of the facts. The Municipal Reformers have been in power on the L.C.C. now for twenty-seven years, and they claim unbounded credit for making London what it is. What justification is there for this complacency? If there is much to be proud of in London, there is also much to be ashamed of. London is the healthiest city in the world, we are told. But even if that were true (which we take leave to doubt), it could, and should, be made healthier still. And saving the rates is not the way to promote the public health. The L.C.C., since it has become the Public Assistance Authority, controls over 70 hospitals with 39,000 beds. Many of these need improvement, some are very bad. More accommodation is wanted and better equipment; the staff of doctors and nurses is not adequate; the dietary of the patients is not satisfactory. But if London's hospitals are not all they should be, London's housing (and the connection of this with health we need not labour) is a scandal of the first magnitude. Practically every one of the metropolitan boroughs has an appalling tale to tell of slums and insanitary basement dwellings and overcrowding. It has been authoritatively estimated that within the county area there are 150,000 people living over three to a room, 1,200,000 over one and a half to a room; that to abate overcrowding at over one and a half to a room 287,000 additional rooms are required, and that in all some 165,000 extra houses are needed. If we were aiming at providing every London family, of two persons or more, with a structurally separate dwelling (and why not?), then, according to the 1931 Census return, we should want 304,000 extra houses; while merely to abate "official overcrowding" the number needed would be 89,000.

What have the Municipal Reformers done, and what are they proposing to do, about this state of affairs? They made large promises of building under the Addison, the Chamberlain and the Wheatley Acts, and failed miserably to fulfil them. In 1930 they put forward a grand five-year plan, which included 6,200 houses for slum clearance re-housing and an average annual expenditure of £725,000 on slum clearance. Actually they expended in 1931, 1932

and 1933 a total sum of £62,372 and provided 118 houses! Now with much trumpet-blowing they have prepared another scheme, under which 250,000 slum dwellers are to be re-housed in the next ten years. What confidence can be felt that this scheme will not suffer the same fate as its predecessors? And how, in face of the crying need on the one hand and of the wealth of London on the other, can it be pretended that the L.C.C. is doing its duty—unless indeed its duty be, first and foremost, to save the rates? It is plain enough, not merely from their record in housing, but from their administration of public assistance, that that is what the Municipal Reformers in general conceive it to be. They protest against the charge that the Public Assistance Committee's policy is parsimonious and harsh. Their excuses may carry weight in Mayfair or Hampstead; they will provoke grim laughter in Bethnal Green and Bermondsey. The only people who can honestly be proud of the policy are those who hold the odd belief that the pinching of the poor is a way of improving their morals.

The alternative to the ignoble ideal of rate-saving, we are warned, is the "menace of Socialism." That the London Labour Party stands for Socialism is true. But to whom and to what is this a menace? Municipal Socialism is not a matter of concentration camps and firing squads. It does not even portend the ruin of the richer citizens. It may, and indeed must, raise the rates, though it is ridiculous to suppose that the rates of London would be doubled in three years. But if there is common human sympathy and common sense in the well-to-do citizens—and we believe there is plenty of both—can they fairly grudge an increase of expenditure on health, on schools, and above all, on housing? London to-day is not the great city it ought to be. It is a mean city, and the life of myriads of its inhabitants is no more than a wretched existence. The menace of the Labour Party is a menace only to callousness and greed; its appeal is to all who believe in a finer London than the Municipal Reformers have given us after twenty-seven years, or are likely, on their own showing, to give us in a century.

BLOOD AND THUNDER IN FRANCE

WHO could have foretold a few weeks ago that in Paris, the capital of the most democratic country in the world, a crowd of many thousand rioters would try to storm the Chamber of Deputies? I was in the Chamber on the evening of February 6th, and I can swear to it that it was touch and go. When, about 7 o'clock, the sounds of the mutiny in the Place de la Concorde began to reach the deputies' ears, I went out of the Chamber and stood for a while on the Concorde Bridge, behind the barricade of the six police lorries and the cordon of the helmeted *gardes mobiles*. The Place de la Concorde, with its flood-lighted Egyptian obelisk, was a mass of shouting and running people. They were being charged, every few minutes, by mounted guards. Numerous wounded guards, policemen and rioters were being carried through the cordon on to the bridge, which seemed like a last refuge. Many of them were terribly injured. I also saw three horses, belonging to Republican guards, with their bellies ripped half-open by Royalist hooligans. And when the *gardes mobiles* suddenly began to retreat slowly across the bridge, towards the Chamber of Deputies, one had the feeling that perhaps the history of France was in the hands of these few men.

When I returned to the Chamber at 7.45, the place was almost in a state of panic. Several deputies could be seen looking hurriedly for their hats and coats and inquiring about the least dangerous exit. M. Chautemps was in the Salle des Pas Perdus, looking yellow with anxiety, and saying that Chiappe should never have been sent away. In the debating hall, where the craziest of all the crazy parliamentary sittings was still going on, Xavier Vallat, a deputy of the Right, with a black patch over one eye, had declared shortly before that he was going to join his comrades in the Place de la Concorde; Daladier looked intensely worried, and seemed to have lost his nerve. From a broken window in the journalists' buvette I could see the *gardes mobiles* retreating still further towards the Chamber. The moment was a critical one. And then suddenly at 8 o'clock the firing began. Had the *gardes mobiles* not fired at that moment the Chamber would undoubtedly have been invaded; and that there would have been a wholesale massacre of deputies is highly probable. Later in the evening the guards on the Bridge received reinforcements, and the situation was saved.

Had the riots of February 6th been organised, or were they a spontaneous outburst of popular discontent? They were both. The Action Française, the Croix de Feu and the Jeunesses Patriotes, who had assembled in the Concorde that night, had made up their minds to cause trouble; but the trouble would never have taken on such proportions had they not received the spontaneous support of thousands of middle-class Parisians who had been pouring all the evening from the Grands Boulevards into the Concorde. These people were neither Fascists nor Royalists; but for weeks past the press of the Right had been working them into a state of anger by exploiting to the utmost the Stavisky affair and all the failings of the Chautemps and Daladier Cabinets. The dismissal of M. Chiappe, the Prefect of Police, had added to their fury; though now that one looks back on it, it was perhaps the one sensible thing that the Daladier Government did during its short career. Heaven knows whether the Chamber would have been as well protected on February 6th if Chiappe had still been in charge of the Paris police!

It was the blood in the streets of Paris on February 6th that drove the Daladier Government out of office the next day. Perhaps the exact circumstances in which Daladier resigned will never be known; but it is certain that he did not resign of his own free will. He, and at least four of the younger members of his cabinet—Frot, Pierre Cot, Guy La Chambre and Mistler—felt that their resignation under the pressure of a nationalist mob would mark a violation of parliamentary sovereignty and a capitulation before mob-rule. In the besieged Chamber on the previous night the Government had obtained a large vote of confidence; and, bloodshed or no bloodshed, Daladier was determined at first not to surrender, and to defend the authority of Parliament. But M. Lebrun, the President of the Republic, would not hear of it. M. Lebrun is a timid and nervous man, and is believed to suffer from weeping fits; and after the rioting outside the Élysée Palace on the previous night, he is said to have been scared out of his wits. Certain Nationalists who visited him on Wednesday morning appear to have made the fullest use of his condition. If he did not get rid of Daladier at once, they said, there would be a revolution or a *coup d'état*. It is rumoured that the eighty-year-old Marshal Lyautey told Lebrun that unless Daladier resigned he would personally march on the Chamber at the head of an army of rioters. So when Lebrun called Daladier to the Élysée, he said to him: "Either you go, or I go." Public opinion, especially in the West of Paris, was definitely hostile to the Government that day, and there would have been some terrible trouble if the President of the Republic had carried out his threat. So Daladier resigned. The Fascists and Royalists had really played into the hands of all those who desired a National Government in France.

Except for the looting of shops by crowds of hooligans on Wednesday night, and a Communist demonstration in the

East End on Friday, which gave the police an opportunity of regaining the confidence of the middle classes, the political rioting in the streets stopped as soon as Daladier had resigned.

A National Government had now become a necessity; frightened by the Nationalist riots, many of the Radicals felt that it would, in fact, be a lesser evil than, say, a Fascist or military dictatorship; they even thought that a National Government would be, in the circumstances, the best possible protection for the republican régime.

After two days' negotiations, the indispensable M. Doumergue formed his national government—a mixed crew with its Herriots and Marquets, its Tardieus and its generals. The Radicals entered it, so they said, in order to keep a check on its activities.

When the National Government came before the Chamber on February 15th the place was unrecognisable. The Radical Party, six of whose members had entered the Cabinet, looked quiet, timid and repentant, and most of them agreed obediently to anything that M. Doumergue asked for. An unusual budgetary procedure? Certainly, sir! A committee of inquiry into the Stavisky affair, which the Chautemps Government had rejected? Certainly, sir! If the Right no longer insisted on Chiappe's reinstatement, it was simply because Chiappe had already served their purpose; and now the man continued to behave arrogantly. He proclaimed far and wide that he would not accept any job other than his old job. He had, of course, been quite right to treat a Radical Government like mud; but a National Government would not stand any of that nonsense! The result of it all is that, largely through its own faults—faults which are shared both by the Radicals and the Socialists (who, in a moment of pedantic folly overthrew the last sound French Government, the Daladier Government of January-October, 1933)—the authority of Parliament in France has been terribly shaken. Will it ever be restored? Probably yes. For the night of February 6th, and all that has happened since, has made people think, and ponder over their past sins. These sins were numerous, and the Stavisky affair, though unimportant in itself, had crystallised all that was bad in French parliamentary morals.

It would be wrong to suppose that because the present Chamber is discredited, the menace of Fascism is great. After all, neither Doumergue nor even Tardieu is a Fascist; though there is no doubt that they are taking advantage of the present weakness of the Chamber, and the Socialists are more than justified in asking for a dissolution and for a new General Election. There is still a sound and strong republican tradition in France, and especially in the provinces (recent by-elections have fully confirmed this), and the sense of liberty is so deep-rooted in the country that it will take more than Royalist rowdies, or the politicians whose game they are playing, to destroy it. February 6th was, however, a stern warning to those Republicans who take the Republic with all its faults for granted; and if the sudden vision of a Fascist menace helps to revive the *mystique républicaine*, which, between 1870 and 1900, saved the Republic from worse plights than this, then a few broken heads in the Place de la Concorde will have been all to the good. ALEXANDER WERTH

Paris, February, 1934.

A LONDON DIARY

I SPENT the end of last week in one of the ugliest and worst hit of the great industrial areas. Everyone spoke of the poverty and unemployment. But I visited a steel-yard which was busier than it had been, they told me, for at least seven years. The men were working overtime, additional shifts at the week-end, and all the rest of it. They were smelting and rolling the extra-hard steel which is used for armaments. It intrigued me to see boxes of the minerals used for hardening steel which had recently arrived from Germany. So Germany, I suppose, is helping to arm us. And I suppose we are helping to arm Germany? Even more strange as a comment on civilisation is the fact that this should be the one flourishing industry in a town which is full of slums and unemployed. Overtime in armament works and unemployment in the constructional trades. Why does not even capitalism see that we should do better to pull down these appalling streets of slums, and, instead of overworking a few men and paying others a dole for doing nothing, really set to work to rebuild industrial England? I was asked that several times during the week-end by working men, and I notice that the idea has so caught on with one group of ex-service men that they have written a pamphlet entitled *A Hundred New Towns for Britain* (Simpkin, Marshall, 1s.). It is an interesting proposal, written by "ex-service man J47485," for a constructive national plan for rebuilding England. The plan is explained in some detail and has the support of several very reputable economists.

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I arrived back in time to see the perfectly orderly hunger-marchers' demonstration in Hyde Park. Both police and marchers were out to behave with complete decorum and there was nothing for the watchful Council of Civil Liberties to do. The *Daily Telegraph* published a vicious attack on these "Socialist busybodies," asking why they should imagine any police irregularities possible on such occasions. The *Telegraph* has forgotten the affidavits of disinterested people who swore to witnessing provocation by plain-clothes officers during the hunger-march of 1932. It should really look up the article in the *Week-End Review* on the subject by that very strenuous anti-Socialist and lover of civil liberty, Mr. A. P. Herbert. However, on this occasion the police behaviour was beyond reproach, while the most improper thing I heard from the marchers was a song which contained the words "We'll put the Prince of Wales on the Means Test!" The best banner slogan, I thought, was the Douglasite: "Would a maggot starve because the apple was too large?"

* * *

Rebuking me for my "anti-Christian bias," the editor of the *Church Times* cites as an example my remark that the signatories of the "Liberty and Democratic Leadership" manifesto "go as far to the right as the Archbishop of York." He assumes quite erroneously some subtle insult to the Church or to Dr. Temple, who has, as everyone knows, an admirable Radical record as a politician. My point was that the document was signed not only by the political "Left," but also by such a very respectable person as an Archbishop. The manifesto itself was a great encouragement, and I believe that those who inspired it have other steps in mind for the preservation of civil liberty.

* * *

I opened the first number of a new magazine, *Lysistrata*, with feelings of interest, benevolence, and hope. It issues from the women's colleges of Oxford University, and it therefore, as its editor remarks, fills a gap in University journalism, for hitherto there has been no magazine edited or written by women students. I hope that the inarticulate undergraduette—I take the words from *Lysistrata* herself—will find her voice in this journal. But let it be *her* voice, not an echo of his voice, of all the male voices that began to flute and thunder in the *Granta* or the *Isis*, the *Cambridge Review* or the *Oxford Magazine*, before they added their tenors or basses to the mighty male chorus of the London press. I don't think that she has quite found her voice yet in this first number. The contributions are interesting and all are readable, but they have an air of "safety first" about them. Only at the very end is a "manifesto" in which the undergraduette's voice is heard, and then it asks—not very clearly—

Next week's Spring Books Number will include a selected list of the outstanding forthcoming books, an article containing new material about the lives and relationships of Turgeniev and the Tolstoys, and special contributions from Lord Olivier, G. D. H. Cole, H. W. Nevinson, Leonard Woolf, Kingsley Martin, Peter Quennell, Max Nicholson, J. H. Driberg, K. John and W. J. Turner.

for an undergraduate council for the University. I have heard it alleged, not without some reason, that women doctors are more hidebound in the etiquette of their profession than even the most professional of the men. I can see that the first women doctors had a good excuse for walking warily among the pitfalls which prejudice was digging for them; and perhaps the editor of *Lysistrata* has done well to show that she can produce as good a review as ever came from Balliol or New College. But having proved this gallantly, I hope that in the next number she will boldly live up to her title and let us hear the voice "of the dim inarticulate mass of women who pass their lives in buildings scattered around the outskirts of Oxford."

* * *

A friend who has just returned from a tour in the United States tells me that the slump has made no difference to the American enthusiasm for mechanism. As an example, he describes a prospectus shown him by a proud inventor who has just devised a machine for "slimming" business men with undistributed middles. The patient, if that is the right word, sits in a cubicle while a machine pummels, prods and massages the centre of his obesity. At the same time his arms and legs are mechanically held and vigorously extended and exercised. During the massage he is also manicured, has his hair cut, shampooed and perfumed. Lest he should be bored by insufficient occupation, a movie is shown on a screen in front of the cubicle and he listens—most wonderful of all—to an automatic rendering of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, which is guaranteed to last no more than the ten minutes allotted for the treatment. The Symphony is said to be completed in the time, but my friend did not learn whether this remarkable feat is accomplished by speeding up Beethoven's *tempo* or by judicious cutting of redundant notes.

* * *

I have had neuritis for several weeks. I have been advised to change my diet in various ways, to visit an osteopath, to wear a nutmeg next my skin, to spend a month at Bath or Buxton, to keep my arm in a sling or (my charwoman's alternative) to scrub until the pain is defeated, to have brine baths, mud-packs, massage, radiant heat, injections, to take a bottle of milk and a glass of aspirin (or it may have been a bottle of aspirin and a glass of milk, I've forgotten which), to have all my teeth out, and finally to take a holiday. I have decided to adopt the last remedy. So there may be no London Diary for the next few weeks. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Readers are invited to send us cuttings suitable for inclusion in this column. Address: 10 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Dr. Grimsby, for the defence, stated that in some ways Gluing's mentality was that of a boy of fourteen or fifteen. It was also stated that Gluing was an efficient optician. Apart from an extraordinary generosity, almost to the extent of the free treatment of customers, he was normal.—Report in *Daily Express*.

Not the least humorous touch in the whole merry affair is a preliminary notice thrown on the screen to the effect that "certain facilities have been given by the Admiralty, but the Admiralty is in no way responsible for the situation." All the same, the picture should make splendid recruiting propaganda.—Daily paper.

People often make mistakes when they talk about crusades. The *Daily Mail* Sweet Pea and the "Standard Bread" campaigns were incidents only.

Here I interrupted Lord Rothermere. "Would you call your campaign for the Blackshirts a crusade or an incident?"

"An incident, definitely an incident," replied his Lordship.—*World's Press News*.

The King's interest in typewriting is hereditary, as Queen Victoria, in 1890, was the first ruler to admit the machines to a Royal household when she introduced one at Windsor Castle.—*Daily Telegraph*.

This is the first time that anyone has troubled to write speech that really represents Garbo—that gives play to those drifts in her deep voice that make you feel you could go out and be lost in them.—C. A. Lejeune in the *Observer*.

He was well spoken and said to me, "I am sorry to inconvenience you in this way, but do not attempt to scream or attract attention else I shall be compelled to hit you over the head with the poker."—*Evening Standard*.

The treatment is beautifully reserved, distinction of sex being so little marked that it is difficult to say if the figures are both male or one male and the other female—probably the latter.—*Times* art critic (on a group of sculpture in Mr. Burney's exhibition).

Conservatives, Liberals and Independents, it is stated, sink party differences on the county council, and work together for the common good. The Socialist Party alone seeks to use it to advance its own political ends.—*Times*.

I beg of you to maintain that tradition that preserves untrammelled that magnificent Constitution that enables me to-night to respond as Secretary of State to the toast of His Majesty's Government!—The Right Hon. J. H. Thomas, at the annual dinner of Wiltshiremen in London.—Reported in the *Observer*.

UNEMPLOYED

THERE are men living in back streets who quite cheerfully went out and fought in France, had a mixed sort of time which on the whole many of them enjoyed, while cursing it picturesquely, and came home again. They expected to find things pretty much as they had left them. Speedily they were disillusioned. To-day they are perplexed, perturbed, wondering what is going to happen.

Such men remember the plentiful food, the recurring tot of rum, the sing-songs, the cheery companionship; they forget the cold, the wet clothing, the soggy boots. The recollection of other men's wounds or death worries them very little, for wounds and death are the lot of soldiers during war; and anyway the bayonet instructor had told them what to do, what to expect, what to feel about it all. They got through and, "When's there going to be another bloody war, Mister?" is a question they ask often—hopefully, almost wistfully.

What did those men ask for in the days before the war? A good job, however hard, with wages enough to buy what they needed—houseroom, clothes, firing, food, beer. Three pound ten a week, perhaps four pounds. They got it by sweating at the forge, by standing before a steam-hammer, girt with leather apron, with swathings on their legs, tongs in their hands, playing with red hot dollops of iron, by guiding other hot iron through the rolls.

To-day the furnaces they tended are dead, the rolls no longer turn. For months, perhaps years, they have been "at play." Instead of seventy shillings they draw, as the outcome of a twice weekly tramp to "the Labour," and a wearisome wait in a queue, fifteen and threepence, with for the wife eight shillings, for each child two. The man who before the war got enough to buy food and firing and all his wife and child needed, while being beholden to none, is to-day asked to draw what is called "the dole," 25*s*. 3*d*., or if his family has grown, 27*s*. 3*d*., 29*s*. 3*d*., 31*s*. 3*d*. He goes home. What does he find? A harassed, worried, shrill-tongued wife, who grumbles that she "can't make do": children who, pert and nervy, cheek him as they slop off to school, badly fed, badly shod, badly clad. Disgusted by the discomfort of his home, the damp clothes hanging up to dry, the stink of past cooking, the table littered with the relics of meals, he slouches off to the street corner. He hasn't so much as a penny in his pocket for a paper. The packet of fags is empty. He has nothing whatever to do.

A few years back the poster proclaiming, "Your King and Country want you," called him, and he went. To-day there

is no poster; but he realises bitterly that his King and Country don't want him any longer.

He meets a pal in similar plight.

"Time for another bloody war," is the greeting.

Many of those men had been serving soldiers before the war. Some joined up as Reservists; some went because the call was too pressing to be ignored, or their sporting instincts were roused. All knew the self-respect that comes from uniform, a daily shave, regular meals, money in the pocket. To-day the uniform is replaced by frowsy clothing; a shave is a weekly event; regular meals are a memory; there is no money except not quite enough to buy the barest necessaries. . .

There is another type of man, less rough. In the old days he "kept himself respectable." He was a skilled craftsman, who took a pride in his job, in his home, in his family. Once a fortnight he attended the meeting of his friendly society lodge, paid his dues, drank his beer, and perhaps if called upon added his bit to what was called, rather oddly, "harmony." That is, he stood up and sang a doleful song unaccompanied, or gave a not very interesting recitation, and accepted quietly the applause that always followed. He was respected by his mates, and he respected himself.

To-day his pluck is broken. For long enough there has been no job for him. He, like his rough companion in misfortune, makes his bi-weekly pilgrimage to "the Labour," to "sign on" and pick up his money. At home he is looked upon as something of an encumbrance for, if his children are in work, what he calls "The Mean Test" comes into operation. That may imply, and often does imply, that he is deprived of every penny of personal income. Authority decrees that his family, earning money, shall keep him; and it does—but sometimes very grudgingly.

There are men who have to ask a son or a daughter for pennies to buy a packet of cigarettes. Those men, now absolutely dependent upon their children, are able-bodied, able-witted, but not wanted in the labour market. Yet not so many years ago they were wanted, and used, when there was fighting to be done; and before that they had regular jobs and regular incomes. They were the men upon whose skill and industry the prosperity of England's trade depended. They were torn from their jobs, and they have never got back.

How does a man feel when he finds himself a lodger in his own home, a pensioner on his children's bounty? Go and ask him. He hates it all. Here, there, all over the place you may meet him if you know where to look—discouraged, dispirited, hopeless. He has helped to wear the advertisement pages of the newspapers in the Free Library threadbare as he turned them over eagerly: he has worn out the soles of his boots tramping from factory gate to factory gate only to be met by the recurring "No" thrown at him civilly or uncivilly through little trap doors. By now he has given up hope.

"It's no use, Guvnor; let the Labour find me a job," he says, and adds, "But who'll set me on when they see this jacket?"

That gets him going. He talks about his troubles—a thing he would never have done in the old days. He makes it pitifully apparent that with his increasingly dilapidated appearance his self-respect has decreased. But he still is sensitive about the shabbiness of his younger children: at the meagreness of their fare. And every now and then he flares up as he speaks of the money he earned before he went soldiering: of the relatively comfortable time they had while he was away overseas. Then he comes to himself and mutters.

"I'll never get a job, Guvnor, unless we have another bloody war. I wish it'd come. The missus and kids'd be well enough fed then."

He turns and slouches off, a bitter look on his face. He is remembering that some of "the kids" are grown up: that he is dependent on them, no longer they upon him.

The men who, having exhausted their claim to "Labour Pay," are given a limited amount (two to four and a half days, according to size of family) of relief work which brings in a bare subsistence, are often exceedingly bitter. Many have been highly respectable, with Socialist or strong Trade Union tendencies, and they feel keenly their plight. They feel they are being used as blacklegs, and resent having to work at such low rates. They resent particularly the fact that their cards are not stamped, and so they are getting no nearer to qualifying once more for Labour Pay. More, they feel that relief work for four days in the week deprives them of any possible chance of applying for jobs. Some of them become very much embittered and hostile towards society.

Those who are allowed nothing at all because of the cruel "Means Test," heads of households, men from forty-five to sixty, suffer most of all. They are bitterly resentful at being forced to depend entirely on their children, at being deprived of even the price of a packet of fags. Their home life is unhappy, they lose control of their children, even of those of fourteen or fifteen who are earning: they are treated with no respect, and either lose their own self-respect and confidence or tend to become bullies. Mostly they feel, as one expressed it, "on the scrap-heap," and are rapidly becoming parasites without hope.

At a Relief Committee (Public Assistance) the other day one such man turned round after having pleaded unsuccessfully for something and shouted, white with passion, "The bloody lot of you want shooting; and if I'd a gun I'd do it."

A regrettable outburst, without doubt—but understandable!

F. G. LAYTON

OUR ANCESTORS

MEN have usually felt a strong desire to be worthy of their ancestors. "And I, can I be base?" cried Robert Louis Stevenson as he recalled the noble lighthouse-builders from whom he was sprung. That, or something like it, was quite a common attitude of mind until fairly recently. There has during the present century, however, been a slump in the reputations of ancestors. To some people their immediate ancestors seem to have been a crowd of elderly gentlemen suffering from blood-lust who showed an unpleasant readiness to give their sons to England. Looking back a generation farther, they discover an ancestry that was little better than a swarm of prigs and hypocrites in top-hats. All Victorian ancestors are suspect, indeed. Did they not seize the greatest wealth-producing inventions ever known for selfish uses? Was not their gospel a blasphemous mixture of the New Testament and "Devil take the hindmost?" Nor when we go back beyond the Industrial Revolution do the ancestors greatly improve. Their most notable characteristics, it seems, were corruption at home and piracy abroad.

A little earlier, ancestors were sanctimonious land-stealers who ended by hating each other and killing each other for the love of God. Their favourite toys were the rack and the thumbscrew. We certainly can see no reason why we should honour or imitate them. One school of historians assures us that, if we go back far enough, we shall find an admirable set of ancestors in the Middle Ages. One would like to believe this, but another school of historians, equally learned, declares that the Middle Ages were a time of cruelty, dirt and ignorance that even a Hollywood film-producer would shrink from putting on the screen. This school's view of the Middle Ages may be gathered from the way in which they say of the inhabitants of a particularly insanitary slum that they are living in "mediaeval conditions," and describe people who are ignorant to the point of imbecility as steeped in "mediaeval ignorance, superstition, etc."

Where, then, can we find a body of ancestors worthy of the respect of so wise a generation as ourselves? The reign of Hadrian in the second century after Christ is commonly described as a "golden age," and many people think they would like to have lived in the age of Pericles, though a large number of those who did so would gladly have changed places with them if they had been offered the chance. As for early Greek history, it was no more agreeable than the

history of the twentieth century. The history of the other ancient races, so far as can be discovered, was worse. Who, reading the Old Testament, feels a longing to have lived in any period described in it, except during the brief sojourn of our first parents in the Garden of Eden? When one reads of the bloodthirstiness of some of those ancient Hebrews, one cannot help rejoicing in the fact that bombs and poison gas had not yet been discovered: otherwise the human race would have been exterminated far sooner than it is going to be. Burke or Mr. Gladstone once said that you cannot indict a whole people: if you think of the deeds of your ancestors, however, you will find that you can quite easily draw up an indict of the entire human race.

This is a gloomy reflection, and one would be in danger of sinking into pessimism if it were not for the fact than an eminent anthropologist, Professor Elliot Smith, has during the past few days produced a long-lost ancestor whom it is possible to put on a pedestal and bow before with genuine respect. This noble ancestor bears some resemblance to the noble savage idealised by the humanitarians of the eighteenth century. He is none other than primitive man. It is pleasant to see science coming to the aid of mythology in this fashion, for mythology has been saying for centuries that primitive man was a good fellow, and it was only after the triumph of science that we began to believe that he was an advanced kind of baboon with various bad qualities added during the advance. The poets told of a Golden Age when everybody was happy and unselfish and lived on the fat of the land, and some of them even suggested that this blissful state of things might have gone on for ever if the discovery of gold had not corrupted the hearts of men with a new passion of acquisitiveness. The men of science did not like this pleasant theory, because it conflicted with the dogmas of evolution. According to the evolutionists, the descent of man has been an ascent. But, if one idealises primitive man as the old poets did, human history must appear as a long story of retrogression. Hence, many anthropologists eagerly informed us that man began his career, not in idyllic glory, but in degradation.

I have not seen a full report of Professor Elliot Smith's lecture, and do not know how far he is prepared to restore the Golden Age to its rightful place in human history, but it is clear, at least, that he sees primitive man as a man endowed with many of the virtues after which we still struggle in vain. "Primitive man," he declares, "was ethical, exemplary, peaceful, honest, truthful, and well-disposed towards his fellow-men; but the growth of civilisation put an end to all this Arcadian perfection." That, certainly, reads like a confession of faith in the Golden Age. In what subsequent age can we find ancestors of whom so many good things can be said? Has man as a type ever since been "ethical, exemplary, peaceful, honest, truthful, and well-disposed towards his fellow-men"? Many men in many generations have had these qualities; man, I think, never.

It would be interesting to know how this honest fellow came to be corrupted. The explanation used to be that he was tempted by a serpent who told him that he was suffering from repressions and would be a far happier man if he could get rid of his apple complex. This explanation, however, has been discredited in recent years, and the Devil is out of favour. There must, at the same time, be some explanation of how this early Washington gradually became capable of doing all the disgraceful things of which we read in the annals of our race. I fancy the fall must have taken place long before civilisation began. It seems to me likely that primitive woman one day found her two primitive sons hammering at each other's eyes and noses, and that, when she had dragged them apart, and asked them, "What is it all about?" one of them answered, "He pushed me," and the other retorted angrily, "He pushed me first." The second answer was a lie, invented on the spur of the moment. What the boy ought to have said was, "I did push him, but the push was accidental." Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell the truth in the heat of a quarrel; more unfortunately still, primitive woman believed the son who had told the lie and showed special favour to him. This convinced him that there was something to be said for lying. It was pleasanter than he could have foreseen, a daring exercise of the imagination, and it produced excellent results. The injustice of the thing, unhappily, filled the other boy with anger. He meditated revenge and his heart was aflame with envy. He began to suspect that his brother was being given the best portions at dinner. He decided that as he could not achieve justice by peaceful means he had better knock his brother's brains out with a stone. In some such way the Golden Age may have been brought to a sudden end, with the entrance of the First Liar and the First Murderer.

I find it difficult to believe that some such thing could not have happened, unless we assume that man was originally born with an incapacity for anger. It seems more probable that the seeds of evil as well as the seeds of good were there from the first. The Preacher said: "God made man upright, but lo! he hath sought out many inventions." I wonder, however, whether man was made more upright in the dawn of the world than he is to-day. If he was, I am sure it did not take him long to begin to seek out the many inventions.

In painting primitive man as a well-disposed and peace-loving human being, it must be admitted, Professor Elliot Smith has a lofty motive. "If man is by nature peaceful and well-intentioned," he declares, "it is obvious that the tendency to engage in organised warfare is a quite abnormal manifestation, due to some arbitrary circumstances which it should not be beyond the wit of man to eliminate. . . . It is, therefore, not without importance to emphasise that human nature cannot possibly be made an excuse for the inevitability of war. Man is essentially a decent creature." Now there is undoubtedly a great deal of cant talked about wars being inevitable "so long as human nature is what it is." Human nature is at once peace-loving and pugnacious, competitive and co-operative, and the triumph of peace and co-operation is just as natural as the triumph of war and competition. The ordinary man has always preferred peace to war, except in the first flush of battle. The Greek soldiers at Troy longed for nothing more passionately than to get back to the black ships and embark for home. War, however, is unfortunately natural, too, when pressure of population urges a tribe in search of new territories, or a strange tribe threatens it, or there is a piratical desire for another people's wealth or lands, or when nation grows angry with nation till tempers are strained to the breaking-point.

"Man is essentially a decent creature," but he has not always behaved as such. The chief arguments against war, to my mind, must be drawn from the future, not from the disposition of our first ancestors in the past. It is pleasant to think of the Golden Age, but it is better to see it ahead than behind us. Still, it is better to see man as a decent creature at the beginning of things than nowhere. Let us not be pessimistic. After all, thousands of years ago human beings may have had common sense. Y. Y.

Correspondence

HAROLD WRIGHT

SIR,—To the sketch, so full of appreciation and understanding, of Harold Wright's career which appeared in your issue of last week from the pen of his old friend, Mr. H. D. Henderson, may I be permitted to add a few words? It will furnish me an opportunity of doing what it was so difficult to find any opportunity of doing while Wright lived, namely, of making some public avowal of the debt which I—as one among several—owed to him, and of the part he played in certain activities to which Mr. Henderson has made reference.

I first met Harold Wright twenty-five years ago, on the eve of a debate at the Cambridge Union of which he had the year previously been President. A little time before that there had fallen

into his hands a book of mine which had approached the war problem, not as one of moral failure or evil intent, but as one involving mainly a misinterpretation of certain economic and social forces. Wright had already, when I met him, interested a number of undergraduate friends in this particular theme, and the following summer the more intimate members of the group (including D. H. Robertson, William Searle, H. D. Henderson, Geoffrey Toulmin, and one or two others, adding myself to the number) spent a boating holiday on the Seine which was the precursor of much larger week-end parties and conferences, and of activities that included the creation of a considerable "Foundation" (The Garton Foundation, with Sir Richard Garton, Lord Esher and Mr. Arthur Balfour as trustees), the establishment of a monthly paper, *War and Peace* (contributors to which included, among others, G. Lowes Dickinson, J. M. Robertson, J. A. Hobson, Lord Bryce, Lord Loreburn, Sir Henry Primrose, G. M. Trevelyan, David Starr Jordan, J. W. Graham, Professor Brentano), study circles, Societies, Leagues, students' organisations in Britain, America and Germany, and international conferences which brought together Germans, French, Americans and British.

In all these activities Harold Wright took not so much a prominent as an indispensable and effective part, suggesting the right person for a given job, warning against the wrong, intervening in a discussion at just the right moment, reconciling differences, shutting off the bores and the cranks with less offence and hurting of feelings than anyone else could possibly have done. All this implied great gifts, applied without stint, patiently, year after year, without any thought, or indeed any possibility, of personal gain.

I know now that much of the work I did in that movement could not have been done without Wright's help. He would look after things when I had to go to America or the Continent, act as my substitute at lectures when I was ill, bargain with publishers, read proofs, much of it even when he was engaged upon such arduous tasks as editing *The Nation*. In fact, he was for twenty years, or thereabouts, my unpaid assistant, though that is not quite the word, for he was guardian as well. I know of no other relationship quite like it: part secretary, part guide and guardian, wholly friend, it made it impossible to give up the effort to fulfil something at least of the expectations he had formed of one. He did something similar for others as well—for Stephen Reynolds in efforts to improve the seafarers' lot. But my work must have had, I think, the lion's share of that quiet and persistent devotion which continued literally till the end, for my secretary received, in my absence, a letter from him the very hour that she heard of his death.

These facts reveal the man. I am grateful for this opportunity of making them public. NORMAN ANGELL

4 King's Bench Walk,
Temple, E.C.4.

LABOUR AND SIR S. CRIPPS

SIR,—Mr. C. H. W. Smith should surely read my letter over again, when he mistakenly says that "the Rev. W. B. Graham and other elder members of the Labour Party are wrong in thinking that they will win votes by an appearance of mildness. The last Labour Government were mild enough," etc. If he reads my letter again he will see that I attacked the last Labour Government for its futility and refusal to attempt to carry out the policy of "Labour and the Nation," when pressed over and over again to do so by its own rank and file and when promised Liberal support by Mr. Lloyd George. Indeed, you yourself, sir, at that time truly said that the Liberals were actually to the Left of the Labour Government, that Government, under leaders whose true worth we have since been able to assess (*sic!*), being somewhere between the Liberals and the Tories! It is not because I consider Sir S. Cripps "too advanced" that I, in common with so many Socialists of infinitely greater merit than my miserable self, so strongly oppose him. It is because I consider his propaganda to be utterly futile and mischievous from a Socialist standpoint. I want to see before I die some practical steps taken towards the advancement of our great ideal. Emphatically I do not want to see any excuse given by us for the putting into effect of measures of Fascism and its concomitant, dictatorship. In spite of all that has happened, I believe that an understanding with the Radicals to carry out what is practically common policy, viz., "Labour and the Nation," is desirable. Everything at present points to a repetition of the 1929 Election, when the General Election comes, as it must sometime in the summer of 1936—two years hence. Are we then going to form a Labour Government with a proper understanding with the Radicals to carry out that policy, or are we, like the French Socialists, going to remain outside in the wilderness and let the reactionaries work their wicked will, until in some far distant future we have converted the agricultural labourer to Socialism? If so, God help England! And my own conviction is that the conversion of England by peaceful means (always supposing that no Fascist *coup d'etat* is attempted and carried through) is far more likely to take place at an earlier date, if a Labour Government is able to show some practical fruit, such as the policy of "Labour and the Nation" involves, than years of such propaganda as to what such a Government ought to do to the Lords, etc., under certain circumstances, when at last it gets a clear majority. After all, an ounce of practice in this case is worth tons of theory! WALTER B. GRAHAM

42 Londesborough Road, Scarborough.

SIR,—In view of much hostile criticism of Sir Stafford Cripps's utterances on the need for a speeding-up of parliamentary procedure it may be useful to register the measure of agreement contained in the following quotation from a member of the present Government.

Mr. Hore-Belisha, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, in a speech to the Barnsley Chamber of Commerce, is reported by the *Times* as having said: "The scientific regulation of our imports and exports had required that the Executive should have far more pliable powers than it possessed under the old working of the parliamentary system. In this, too, a revolution had been achieved. We were showing how the parliamentary system could be reconciled with swift action. The precedent of the Import Duties Advisory Committee was capable of extension, and Parliament, instead of being overwhelmed with detail, showed a tendency to become the grand assize of the nation in which general verdicts were given." H J. C. Sutton.

AUSTRIAN DEMOCRACY AND ANTI-SEMITISM

SIR,—The Vienna correspondent who contributes the article on "Austria—Whose Revolt?" to your issue of February 24th, attributes the responsibility for the Austrian Fascist counter-revolution to a certain Herr Hecht, whom he describes as "the *Hausjude* of the Ministry of War" and "one of those intelligent talmudistic Jewish experts in twisting words and paragraphs." In view of the great importance that your correspondent attaches to the person of Herr Hecht, it would have been very interesting to learn something about his exact position, status, and functions, especially as his name has not been previously mentioned in any of the numerous despatches from Vienna published in the English press particularly in recent months. Unfortunately, the characterisation of him given in the article tells us less about the personality of Herr Hecht than about the mentality of your correspondent, who indulges in the typical vocabulary of a Nazi propagandist. If he is anxious, as I presume he must be, to serve the cause of humanity and democracy, he should at least refrain from betraying any anti-Semitic bias. Such a course would be all the more politic on his part since the leaders of the Austrian Social Democratic Party, Dr. Deutsch and Dr. Otto Bauer, are of the same race as Herr Hecht himself.

Child's Hill, N.W.2. ISRAEL COHEN

[Our correspondent is very far from being anti-Semitic or pro-Nazi. His reference was to a particular Jew who was on the Fascist side.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

THE S.C.R.

SIR,—We think that it might interest your readers to know that from March 17th, the Society for Cultural Relations will be occupying new premises at 21 Bloomsbury Square, W.C.1, which will permit of the inclusion of a special Library and Clubroom dedicated to the memory of Frank Wise and his work in the furthering of Anglo-Soviet relations. In addition to his services to the Socialist Movement of this country, and the actual work carried out by him as Treasurer to our Society, the recent Soviet Trade Agreement may be said to owe much to his efforts over the past ten years in improving relations between the Soviet Union and Great Britain.

It is hoped to make the "Frank Wise Room" as up to date and as complete as possible, as a library of reference for books, periodicals and newspapers dealing with the U.S.S.R. The S.C.R. would welcome financial support for this memorial from those who are interested, and would be very willing to give information as to membership and the activities of the Society.

S.C.R., HILDA BROWNING
The Society for Cultural Relations Secretary.
between the Peoples of the British
Commonwealth and the U.S.S.R.

DR. MARION PHILLIPS

SIR,—May I request the courtesy of your columns to ask any friends of my aunt, the late Dr. Marion Phillips, to lend me material which would be suitable for inclusion in the biography which I am now preparing? I should, of course, copy and return any papers that are sent to me within the shortest possible time.

147 Palace Chambers, FRANCES R. LEVY
Bridge Street, S.W.1.

[Dr. Marion Phillips was the first Australian woman to become a Member of the House of Commons, and her niece, Miss Frances R. Levy, was closely associated with her in political work from 1918–1931. In view of Dr. Phillips' international work, we hope that foreign papers will copy this notice.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

DIABETIC ASSOCIATION

SIR,—In order to utilise the latent solidarity and fellow-feeling which exists among people suffering from diabetes, it is hoped to form a Diabetic Association which will promote research and better treatment and help in the solution of the particular social, economic and personal problems which confront sufferers.

Most of the leading diabetic consultants and heads of hospital clinics have already promised their support, and it now remains to interest the general body of diabetics, together with doctors, nurses and social organisations. It is, therefore, proposed to ask for subscriptions, and (*a*) establish a general fund; (*b*) select a council from the first subscribers; (*c*) issue a quarterly journal.

Arrangements so far have been made by a small provisional committee. It has no funds and its clerical staff is voluntary. The committee has, therefore, decided to invite the adhesion of foundation members willing to subscribe £5 to enable the Association to be established on a sound basis. A meeting of foundation members can then be called to draft a constitution and to detail a plan of action.

The provisional secretary is Dr. Stella Churchill, to whom suggestions and all requests for information should be sent. The provisional address is 59 Doughty Street, London, W.C.1.

47 Chiltern Court, H. G. WELLS
Clarence Gate, N.W.1.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

SIR,—Your London Diary on February 17th referred to the tragic case of Mr. and Mrs. Hickley. But the plain facts, which, apparently unknown to "Critic," had already been stated by the Minister of Health, seem to show that any insufficiency of relief to the Hickley family was really due to *their failure to apply for it*. Mr. Hickley was not under the ordinary Unemployment Insurance Scheme, but under the contracted-out scheme of the (commercial) Insurance Industry. It follows that the Ministry of Labour was out of the picture anyhow, and that the local authority was the proper agency of relief. But that authority was never given a chance to help.

RONALD C. DAVISON

PRISON AND LABOUR

SIR,—The letters of Miss Craven and Mrs. Rackham on this subject have been very interesting. During a recent visit to the heavy section of the British Industries Fair I was invited to inspect some of the latest wood-working machines, among which was a very ingenious machine for cutting dove-tail joints in a fraction of the time it takes to do the work by hand. Much to my amazement I was told that steps were being taken to acquire a machine of this kind for use in the workshops at Borstal.

In competitive business it is no doubt necessary to adopt every labour-saving device, but, if my information is correct, it does seem unnecessary and altogether wrong to use machines of this kind, when the work to be performed is so interesting and so good for the development of desirable qualities in the craftsman. If the aim of our penal institutions is to fit men for a fuller and more useful life, there are few occupations more conducive to this end than good craft-work.

If, as Mrs. Rackham suggests, the work done in prison is poor in quality, dependence upon mechanical appliances for such work as dove-tailing will not improve the quality of workmanship, but rather make the men poorer craftsmen and less fitted for independent creative work. EDWARD BRUTEN

Friends' Occupational Centre for
Unemployed Men at Kingstanding
and Perry Common.

THE RATES

SIR,—It is evident from the speeches and written addresses of the Municipal candidates for the forthcoming L.C.C. elections that they are making "Rates" a test question. They speak about Socialist extravagance, and advocate rate reduction and economy. We would point out that it is nonsense to talk rate reduction in face of an ever-increasing demand for rate expenditure on housing, slum clearances, etc.

The problem to be faced is, who should pay the rates, and upon what basis should they be levied? Labour's challenge is that the land values, created by the community, are the true and just basis for rating, and that all rates now levied upon houses, business premises and other improvements should be abolished, thereby facilitating the erection of better and lower-rented houses, and the clearance of slum areas. We are now spending millions of the ratepayers' money which is hourly increasing the value of London's land. Who has a better right to take the land value than the people who create it? E. BELFOUR, President
FREDK. VERINDER, General Secretary

English League for the Taxation of Land Values.

THE SCOTTSBORO' CASE

SIR,—Once more the notorious Scottsboro' case is coming into prominence. The third trial of the nine Negro boys, who were charged in April, 1931, with the rape of the two white women, ended in the December of last year at Decatur, Alabama, with death sentences on Heywood Patterson and Clarence Norris.

Ever since the lads were first convicted, international public opinion has been dissatisfied with the way in which the judicial proceedings have been conducted. The atmosphere of race prejudice in which the first two trials took place, the lack of evidence against the Negroes, and the fact that one of the alleged victims, Ruby Bates, has since denied her allegations, all seem to indicate that the charge was without foundation, was indeed a "frame-up."

The boys have been kept alive up to now only by the untiring work of the American International Labor Defence, aided by generous financial support from well-known men and women and organised protests in all parts of the world.

The Alabama Court has just refused to hear petitions from the defence demanding a new trial for Patterson and Norris. The remaining prisoners are still awaiting trial.

The boys can and must be saved. A Scottsboro' Defence Committee has been set up in London to organise protests to the American authorities against the methods of conducting the trials, and to raise funds as this country's contribution to the expenses of the coming trial. We appeal to all to send donations as soon as possible to the Hon. Treasurer of the Committee, Professor Lascelles Abercrombie, 4 Parton Street, London, W.C.1.

F. LEWIS DONALDSON, Canon of Westminster
HENRY NEVINSON
JULIAN HUXLEY

INCOME TAX AND UNEMPLOYMENT CUTS

SIR,—I am a constant reader of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION, and am in sympathy with its outlook on national and social questions. The writer of "A London Diary" invites people who are comfortably off to join in opposing any remission of Income Tax until the unemployed have more money. I am in support of this idea. My work is that of a general practitioner, and my practice is a mixed one, but chiefly working class. As a medical man, I am convinced of the folly of giving the unemployed worker an income which is inadequate to provide

sufficient nourishment to keep his family in health. In my opinion, good food is more important than good housing, and many of the poor are having to pay high rents for council houses built just after the war. This leaves them less money to expend on food.

45 Park Road, Bingley. ARTHUR RHODES

[Letters to the same effect continue to reach us by every post. —ED. *N.S. & N.*]

THE INDIAN EARTHQUAKES

SIR,—Still another calamitous earthquake has rocked India, and has added to the distress of the affected areas. Indian papers to hand give harrowing accounts of the tragedy. The Rajendra Prasad Relief organisation is working night and day to provide water, shelter and food for the people, and relief centres have been opened in many places. Volunteers are pouring in from all over India, but funds are sadly inadequate. Help is badly needed.

We are making this individual appeal to you for a donation which will be forwarded to Babu Rajendra Prasad without any deduction. It is needless to tell you that a national organisation like the Central Relief Committee reaches the neediest people. The situation was tragic a few weeks ago—it is much worse now.

V. K. KRISHNA MENON (Chairman).

Indian Earthquake Relief Fund,
165 Strand, W.C.2.

Miscellany

THE STRANGE MAN

SURELY a genuine Australian aboriginal must have some anthropological interest in London, and if so, surely this interest ought to be able to put a few shillings in his pockets. Yet Mr. Johnson had no shillings there except those put in by the State. It was unfortunately true that his name was Mr. Johnson, and that the Relieving Officer said he was a Wesleyan, but these facts might not be really damaging, and he looked aboriginal all right. Mr. Johnson was a tall, thin man with black, fuzzy hair, melancholy eyes, and a nose like a hockey-stick. I knew him because he was an out-of-work seaman who, being over fifty, would almost certainly never get a job at sea again. But surely, this aboriginal business—that raised a glimmer of hope, and one had visions of anthropologists showing him on lecture platforms to groups of students who would never be able to do "field work" themselves, and to whom Mr. Johnson might be a god-send; of students measuring his head; of lecturers pointing out the shape of his skull, probing into the religious belief of his grandparents, before they, perhaps, became contaminated by Wesleyanism; and of course Mr. Johnson was to be paid for all this, and paid well. The only thing to be done was to go and see him, and find out his life story—do a little "field work" for oneself, in fact. Mr. Johnson's home was in Limehouse, as a seaman's home should be (unless it is in Rotherhithe or Tottenham), in one of those enormously long, narrow streets which run parallel with the river. The street was full of traffic, both motor and horse-drawn, and, as in many dockside thoroughfares, the smell of horse dung was permeating, a breath of a past age. The houses were old, many of them red brick, vaguely suggesting the Georgian. Most of them were small shops with foreign Jewish names over their doors, but at one bend of the road there were two rows of the old red houses facing each other, the pavement was tree-bordered, the houses were "private." Then the tiny shops began again, and it was here that the aboriginal lived.

By a stroke of luck, when I went to see him, he was leaning against a doorpost, staring down the street in an uninterested manner. No doubt, being an unemployed man, he was feeling bored, and he looked as melancholy as, for some reason, only a "coloured man" can look. Having grasped the peculiar object of the visitor, he welcomed me warmly and invited me into his home at once. It was over a shut-up shop, and the house was so old that the staircase was built into the wall, winding and pitch dark. It led on to a minute landing from which opened his two rooms, which were as much a home as any place I have ever been in, exquisitely tidy and clean, with a suggestion of comfort obtained by no other means than tidiness and cleanliness. His wife was there, and a large, bouncing, blackish boy of twelve years or so, with fuzzy hair, who might leap back into the aboriginal home of Australia without exciting any curiosity whatever, but his mother was fair and blue-eyed and English.

Then it all came out in a steady stream. Mr. Johnson was a cosmopolitan. He had travelled the world over. He could express himself. Yes, his father was a real Australian all right and he'd been brought up in Australia. No, not in the country, in a town. His mother was a Lancashire woman. This was a terrific blow, which had to be concealed as well as one could. Visions of his fortune being made in the class-rooms of Universities dwindled away while he went on to tell me that he'd been the bad boy of the family, wouldn't stay at home, wanted to see the world. He had met his wife in Australia, where she had been brought from England as a children's maid on board ship, and then they had both come to England and settled here, while he went on seafaring, only now he couldn't get a job, though of course he always expected to, every day, and they both wanted to go back to Australia, only, of course, they couldn't, and some of his children were grown up now, and his eldest boy had gone to sea, and his daughter had married and had two children and died. I knew about that, didn't I? Yes, I did. And he'd had that trouble with his son-in-law ("Oh, him!" interjected his wife, wagging her head angrily) about taking care of the baby and the bigger child; and his wife was a Catholic, you see, but his son-in-law being a Protestant, like him, didn't want his child brought up a Catholic, and they'd had words, and—yes, he had seized a chopper to have a go at him. He was a hasty man, but he meant no harm, and hadn't done any, only the Relieving Officer saw him, but that wasn't the worst. His son, the one at sea, was going to be married and he'd sent home two pounds ten to help get a few things together and pay the rent, and it was all gone, so he didn't tell the Committee, because it was spent, and some of it had been owing, and anyway it was all gone. He hadn't any money now, not a penny, and the Committee found out and told him he wasn't to have any more. If he had no money he could go to the Institution, and his wife too, and they said they'd put the Cruelty to Children man on to him too, for not providing for his children.

"But he knows all right," Mr. Johnson went on. "He won't do anything, he won't."

The bouncing boy of twelve stared at us with his black eyes. He did not look alarmed.

"I tell you the money was all gone before ever I see the Committee. Ten shillings was for my boy's furniture. Some was owing."

I could not follow his financial arrangements. Only one thing emerged clearly, the unforgivable sin in the eyes of a Public Assistance Committee. He had suppressed the fact that he had, for a few days, possessed two pounds ten. He had lied. He was ruined.

There was only one glimmer of hope. Next week his boy's ship was due to be in. His boy was coming home to be married. "Come in here," said Mr. Johnson, leading the way across the landing and opening a door. I followed him and went into the front room over the disused shop, while his wife peeped over his shoulder.

The wallpaper was a brilliant cobalt blue, with a flower design in black and white. The bed was large, covered with an intensely white thick counterpane. Beside the bed was a fixed dresser, with the woodwork completely hidden by rows and rows of bright pink paper neatly glued or nailed on. On the walls hung large photographs of Australian aboriginal relations, pleasant-looking people with fuzzy hair. No attempt to hide "black blood" here. There were some

other pieces of furniture, very new and shiny. The sun streamed in and emphasised the dazzling cleanliness of the little bridechamber, the blue walls, the startling pink decorations. It was a shrine, the expression of an ideal. The father and mother who had got it ready with such care and work almost lowered their voices as they pointed out its beauties.

"That's for him," said the aboriginal.

He might be just in time to save his home and theirs.

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson followed me down the dark stairs, and stood at the door waving goodbye. The sun shone on Mr. Johnson's yellow face. It was true that he had very little to eat; that his future was quite insecure; that he had made a muddle of things and done wrong, though he would not admit it; but he looked happier. He had been able to show his boy's room to a stranger. THEODOSIA LLOYD

MR. NOEL COWARD

HIS Majesty's Theatre is packed. The last time I *remember* having been there—for plays and entertainments are apt to pass from my mind more completely than books, it was also packed. Then *Bitter Sweet* was filling that enormous theatre. I enjoyed it; I wept—for I am not one of those who obstinately refuse to be led to the fountain of easy tears. It is a mistake not to enjoy sentiment; criticise it afterwards if you will, but it is stupid to withdraw yourself as though obvious pathos defiled. Pathos is one of the strong colours on the dramatist's palette; Shakespeare's pathos is often barefaced and laid on very thick.

What an astonishing man Noel Coward is! Never was a man more completely "of the theatre." Composer, dramatist, producer, actor, and, if I am not misled by certain touches, also designer for the stage. The spirit of his own fancy pervades everything.

> I am the batsman and the bat,
> I am the bowler and the ball;
> The Umpire, the Pavilion cat,
> The roller, pitch and stumps and all.

So the author of *A Conversation Piece* might almost boast—ignoring for the moment that he could not have attained his end without the light, delighting humour and delicious bird-like voice of Mlle. Yvonne Printemps. And what an astonishingly psychological *chef* he is! He knows exactly what ingredients will—first of all—mix; then what mixture will appeal to the public palate at a particular moment. Those ingredients must be fresh and yet familiar. If they are too fresh they will puzzle: "What's this? Is it nice or nasty? I must ask someone else." A playwright cannot fill His Majesty's night after night if he sets an audience talking to itself like that. On the other hand, if the flavours are too familiar, even if they give pleasure, the public won't be content. They will be uneasy, and when they talk about the entertainment afterwards, before they praise it and say "Go, go," they will endeavour to convey that they are not behind the times, and that there was nothing new in it for them. The explanation of the reluctance in some quarters to pay due tribute to Mr. Noel Coward's extraordinary cluster of gifts—and to his equally remarkable and sensitive intelligence, is that he so often approaches his themes from a psychological *chef's* point of view when inventing a dish. They overlook that other part of his endowment, his unerring sense of what ingredients will blend—his artistic sensibility. In *A Conversation Piece* the ingredients are the Regency, Brighton, and a very old appealing situation: the little girl who falls in love with her elderly guardian, he having put aside the idea of winning the heart of youth. It is familiar—far older than *The Professor's Love Story*, but it is a theme on which pretty variations can be played. It is slighter than the theme of *Bitter Sweet*, which was so nicely timed. Then the young were wondering if they had not lost something in scrapping romantic love, and the older generation were quite sure that they had; and the latter had the intense pleasure of saying at *Bitter Sweet*: "Look, that is the way *we* fell in love." It was seldom true, but *Bitter Sweet* was pertinent criticism of Cupid's latest phase, and Mr. Noel Coward's heart was in it.

In *A Conversation Piece* there is no criticism of modern life. It is a theme for sentimental and visible decoration; it is adroitly taken advantage of. Love between youth and age is never stale. The Regency craze is over, and yet it is not stale. We still like to see women looking like crocuses or elaborate milk-cans; the spectacle is not too familiar or too strange. We all know Brighton, and we all are aware of the "sunny domes" of the Pavilion and of the shades of Prinny and Mrs. Fitzherbert behind the confusion of the asphalt parade. *A Conversation Piece* is a pageant not too familiar and not too fresh; and at His Majesty's it is pretty indeed to watch. The piece is a brilliantly adorned, coloured, sentimental extravaganza. It sends up the spirits, though it is in danger at certain points of moving too slowly. To test the *ensemble* of scenes and also the breadth of the acting I went again, a second time, to see it from the back of the dress-circle whence those things are better estimated. They passed that test magnificently. And I noticed this, that Mr. Noel Coward's acting had gained in a night or two in assurance and succinctness and authority. He, the elderly guardian and ruined French aristocrat, has a difficult part to play. Composure is its keynote; monotony its danger. He achieves that elegant composure in gesture and movement which is absolutely necessary as a contrast to the gamine and gaiety of the delicious "Yvonne," whose walk and graceful petulant awkwardness reinforces the child-of-nature note in the words she has to speak.

About the pictures which the play forms continually before our eyes—they are only "anecdote pictures," but they are very agreeable and inspire indeed an astonished pleasure. It is odd—I should like some day to go into this—a picture which I would not look at on a wall gives me pleasure on the stage. Had I seen a painting which was a facsimile of, say, the tableau of the Regency party in Act II, I would not have given it a second glance, but on the stage it riveted me; perhaps because I knew that in a moment it would vanish and change, and because I was interested in the figures as human beings. Unconsciously in the theatre one applies standards which are different, not purely aesthetic ones. But one scene or rather one item in a scene, the sea-light beyond the sitting-room windows, seen through the graceful iron-work of the balconies of that yellow room, never ceased, even while Mlle. Printemps herself was singing, to enter into my total pleasure. But I must add a word or two about the story; Mr. Noel Coward has sprinkled a little pepper over the sweetness of his dish. In the first place the aristocrat-guardian himself is also an adventurer. He intends to marry a girl he has picked up in a cabaret in France to a rich Englishman and thus recoup his battered fortunes with a commission on the marriage. The critical observer will not fail to notice the adroitness with which the dramatist has leapt over the common-place after she has declared her love for him. It is a near shave, but the pitfall is just cleared. There is, for instance, the first kiss between them, after which he stumbles blind and miserable to the door; and she—as we anticipated—buries her face in her hands—for love between them means ruin to both. But then, when she raises her face, she suddenly skips into the merriest of triumphant dances! That moment is brilliantly right. It is an example of that quick adroit tact which enables Mr. Coward to be sentimental without being flat. He has, too, one more surprise for us up his sleeve, when we think all is plain sailing. The scene which struck me as missing its mark was the ballet (for so it is) in the garden, at night, after she has declared her love, and he has become aware that he longs for her and for love; when he knows that he cannot now without pain go on with his scheme of marrying her to the young marquis. The idea of his watching, in agony of mind, the roving lovers in the garden is dramatically right; but to my mind the drama would have been more effectively conveyed

had his movements *not* been those of the dancer seeking in a ballet for his lost love, peeping into women's faces and making the dancer's gestures of despair—if he had remained a realistic figure; an elderly man, almost motionless beneath a tree, an outcast in a garden of love. I cannot criticise the music. The piece is full of pretty, conciliating, titillating airs.

DESMOND MACCARTHY

THE "FLOP"

AT the close of a play called *This Side Idolatry*, produced during the autumn in Shaftesbury Avenue, Shakespeare was shown as a failing dramatist, whose "flops" were resented by his company, now looking to John Fletcher as the rising hope of their fortunes. It may have been so, but I felt that modern theatrical psychology, so absurdly nervous about failure, was behind this scene. I doubt whether Burbage and his men were greatly put out by plays that "failed to please"; they lived in such a bustle, producing or reviving a fresh piece every few days, that they had little time to brood over their own mistakes or gloat over those of their rivals.

Much ado about "flops" is one of the curses of our time. The "ado" is to some extent natural since so much money vanishes so rapidly in the case of a London "flop." But far too much notice is taken of mistakes and disasters. The restaurants dear to the profession are schools for scandal where new ventures are killed in advance and the deaths are surveyed with knowing and superior smiles. One result is to make the author of a failure feel that he has committed an unpardonable offence and destroyed his chances for the coming years. Probably he has only had a bit of bad luck; with happier production, better casting, a different house, the play might have gone well enough. Wise men like Mr. Noel Coward, who, it is worth remembering, once had his black period, take as little notice as they can, plod on, and rise on stepping-stones of their "flopped" selves. But such resilience is uncommon.

The "flop" remains a scar upon the memory and the flopped play disappears for ever, although it may have possessed considerable qualities and fully merit a second trial. It is here that our lack of a repertory system is so damaging to the London theatre. In a national or municipal theatre on continental lines plays are produced, acted for a day or two, and then placed among the stock. Thus, a piece of distinction, although it may have received the kind of initial criticism which would kill it dead here, does not necessarily disappear for ever. It is brought out again and the limited audience which wants that kind of piece has further chances to see it. In London, where theatres are expensively hired specially for one piece, unless large numbers of people rush to see it at once and, which is equally vital, buy the costly seats as well as the cheap ones, the play "flops" and disappears; it may wobble for a few weeks, but once it has gone there is little chance of its returning. There is no repertorial storage, no home of rest for the cause that ought not to be lost.

The repertory system affords a stability which is desperately needed here, where the costly "flop" wastes both the money of backers and the hopes of authors and actors. During the past season three plays of quality, all involving considerable outlay on costume and scene, and all decorated with taste as well as with expense, *This Side Idolatry*, *Acropolis*, and *Spring, 1600*, have "flopped" and vanished. The combined "run" of all three can have been little more than a month. They had their mistakes, but there was abundant beauty and intelligence in all of them. It may have been that if a millionaire had been ready to nurse them over their early weeks they would have survived their growing-pains. But the expenses involved were crushing; our system enforces infantile mortality on a murderous scale.

Can anything be done to create more continuity in the theatre and to break this preposterous muddle of gambling against the odds? The National Theatre, according to present prospects and the laws of compound interest, is half a century away. The cities will do nothing and the local repertories live from hand to mouth, occasionally soliciting a dose of charity to remedy elephantiasis of the over-draft. The rich patron can do something. Sir Barry Jackson has sometimes backed a weak beginner and turned it into a lusty adult; *The Farmer's Wife* was the historic case of faith (plus funds) being amply justified. But he has never attempted to accustom London playgoers to a stock or repertory system; instead, he has discarded his failures as a rule and gone on to fresh affairs. It is not for outsiders to blame him; he best knows the bill of costs. The other remedy is the establishment of a Guild or Subscription Theatre, on the lines of the New York Theatre Guild, which has proved a considerable success. In such a case, theatrically minded people pledge themselves for a season of productions, thus giving the management security to plan ahead and not leaving them at the mercy of each day's receipts and liable to ruin by a sudden spell of fog or influenza. They can rely on a certain support for every piece they provide; they have to justify the subscribers' confidence or the subscribers will cease to pay up. But, if they can do that, they are on strong ground; moreover, they can get their actors at reasonable rates by offering them a seasonal contract. The London Theatre at present is far too much of a roulette-board. Hit or miss, "flop" or "wow," vast loss or a win *en plein*—it is no atmosphere for an art to breathe.

An attempt to build up a Guild was made some years ago by Mr. Robert Atkins; Mr. Macdermott at the Royalty is trying again. The play with which he started, Mr. O'Casey's *Within the Gates*, is an excellent example of the piece that ought not to be voted "flop" should it lack an immediate and profitable run. Mr. MacCarthy has brilliantly described the failure of a negative which had greatly impressed him to develop into the picture of his hopes. If Mr. Macdermott had security of tenure he could bring it out again at a later date and perhaps handle it in a different way. At any rate there ought to be second chances for the plays of men of proved theatrical distinction, particularly when those plays have roused controversy as this has done. What would be the losses of literature if all books that failed to sell heavily in the first month were taken away and burned? Yet that is the fate which the methods of Shaftesbury Avenue impose upon the theatre.

Mr. Basil Dean has outlined his plans to achieve permanence by linking the stage of the Cambridge Theatre with his screen studios at Ealing. He hopes to have a company on long contract whom he can use at will in his theatre or his film-work, thus defeating the continual ravages of Hollywood which sweeps away any young player who has come to the front in England. He would act plays and film them, and what was lost on the former swings might be recovered on the latter roundabouts. Unfortunately he began with a "flop," but he is not a man to be easily turned from his resolve. At any rate, like Mr. Macdermott, he has a plan and a policy; meanwhile the London Theatre continues to scramble along on its Monte Carlo lines, collecting backers for a single throw, throwing, losing nine times and winning once (a generous estimate of the wins), cursing the public, the weather, the critics, and then solemnly renewing the routine, and searching for more punters to try a hazard on the green tables of Shaftesbury Avenue.

IVOR BROWN

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Windfall"

Mr. R. C. Sherriff is still not as good as the author of *Journey's End*. Perhaps, in the nature of things, it was impossible for him to be. But there is a degree of photographic shrewdness in *Windfall*, presented at the Embassy Theatre, which indicates that he is by no means as bad as the author of *Badger's Green*. Mr. Spooner, ironmonger's assistant of Putney, who wins £80,000 in a sweepstake, is authentic, not so much in what he does—which is practically nothing—but in what he does not wish to do. He

is the mediocre idealist who, for twenty years, has looked forward to the day when he might make the last payment and claim his house as his own; the unimaginative "little man" who is overwhelmed by the wealth which descends upon him, because he is too old to accept the uprooting which his change of circumstances demands. Just a little less of sensitive prescience, and he would wallow, with his brother-in-law, in visions of hotels, and dancing-girls and cars and coconuts. Just a little less conscience, and he would scatter his fortune, all but a comfortable £10,000 or so, among the friends who are uneasy in his presence, and join his boss as a bigger and better ironmonger. As it is, his imagination is baffled, and in attempting to impose his workaday ideals upon his romantic brother-in-law he drives him first to drink and then to suicide. This is preposterous. The Syd Martins of this world are not so uncompromising, nor are the Spooners so hard-hearted. But one feels that the action is less important than the characters, who are presented round the windfall like bees round a honey-pot; and these are genuine realities, for all the efforts of some of the members of the company to expand them into absurdity. Mr. Hugh E. Wright is altogether admirable as the unassuming, but obstinate, sweepstake winner. Miss Winifred Oughton achieves marvels of authenticity as his Cockney sister-in-law (who adores publicity), but Mr. Vernon Sylvaine disguises his suicidal tendency beneath a gusty exuberance which is altogether too deceptive.

"The Big House"

A fatal eloquence on the part of the heroine is responsible for much of the boredom which descends periodically upon the Playhouse auditorium throughout *The Big House*. Her talkativeness has not the excusing brilliance of her sisters in the Shavian drama, and her passion for dissection and dissertation, allied to an idealistic temperament, dooms her almost inevitably to a tedious priggishness, unless some strenuous and expert rescue-work is put in by the producer and actress concerned. Neither Mr. Lion nor Miss Alison Leggatt attempts it, and before long one finds oneself tending to wince each time she reappears. Yet it is a pity to be bored out-of-hand with the piece, for all its stagey curtains, and the unfortunate streak of sentimentality which falsifies the end. Mr. Lennox Robinson is a sensitive dramatist who is capable of recognising a great theme, if not of handling it; and *The Big House* is big enough to express the testing and the destruction of an entire social order which has failed to justify its existence in a crisis. The collapse of the Irish landed aristocracy, unlike that of the Russian as Chekhov saw it before the revolution, was a violent one, and the home of the Alcocks suffers successive indignities at the hands of the Black-and-Tans and the Republican gunmen—it stands in its tattered eighteenth-century pride as an obvious and helpless target. But its cardinal weakness, as Kate Alcock realises, lies in the character of her father, who has all the virtues appropriate to a peaceful, settled existence, virtues which in a time of stress can appear painfully weak and fatuous. He sees the faults on both sides, he does all he can as an individual to mitigate the horrors of the civil war: but his intellectual democratic sympathies are incompatible with the Big House and what it stands for, so that in the end he is burnt out like his barbarian neighbour and goes away to resume his kindly, detached existence in Bournemouth, with his kindly, unimaginative English wife, who for so many years has pined for the amenities of Ealing. Kate's decision is to stay and defy the village she has been attempting for so many years to win over, though what exactly she proposes to do when the effect of her gesture has worn off is not clear. Mr. Nicholas Hannen and Miss Mabel Sealby are excellent as the old people, and Tony Quinn and Pegeen Mair deserve all praise for the playing of two small parts perfectly.

Huberman

The well-known Polish violinist Bronislaw Huberman gave a recital at the Queen's Hall last Saturday afternoon in aid of the German Refugees' Assistance Fund, which is an association of five non-political relief societies that form a central fund to assist German refugees irrespective of race, creed or political opinion. The five societies are The Academic Assistance Council, whose President is Lord Rutherford; the International Student Service, chairman Professor Ernest Barker; the International Committee for Professional Workers, whose English representatives are Viscount Cecil of Chelwood and Mrs. Corbett Ashby; the Emergency Committee of the Society of Friends and the Special Committee of the Save the Children Fund.

A large audience—including a number of people, like Mr. H. G. Wells, who are rarely seen in a concert hall—enjoyed a fine programme. Huberman was in very good form and gave a magnificent performance of Bach's Chaconne. In the Kreutzer Sonata and Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto he had the collaboration of an excellent pianist, Jakob Gimpel, whose musicianly playing added greatly to one's enjoyment of these works. As a rule when famous virtuosos play sonatas or concertos with a pianist, the pianist is reduced to, or capable of, only a very secondary role, but on this occasion there was a genuine collaboration of colleagues.

The Group Theatre

That enterprising organisation of young actors and others interested in dramatic art known as the Group Theatre, gave the first performance of W. H. Auden's *The Dance of Death*, preceded by an anonymous fourteenth-century morality play, *The Deluge*, at the Westminster Theatre last Sunday night. In Mr. Auden's poetry there was evidence of dramatic talent which the production of *The Dance of Death* confirms, although it disappointed some of the admirers of his work in the reading.

The impression that it made was distinctly one of being present at the laying of the foundation of a new dramatic art. But nothing is wholly new and it was interesting to discover that Mr. Auden's technique has something in common with a much older technique, that of the mystery or pre-Elizabethan morality play. *The Dance of Death* has absolutely nothing in common with the degenerate theatre of the present age. For one thing it is a return to reality and to mystery. During the last hundred years critics have been discussing the possibility of a new poetic drama and all capable of thought have agreed that what was wrong with the theatre was its lack of poetry—in other words, of imaginative reality. But many literary men have no dramatic sense and their attempts to write for the theatre have only produced a number of versified fossils. Mr. Auden uses prose and verse, but it is living verse. *The Dance of Death* is by no means a masterpiece, but it is of greater importance for the future of drama than all the "masterpieces" of Mr. Noel Coward, Mr. Somerset Maugham, and the pseudo-realistic school.

The production by Tyrone Guthrie and Rupert Doone was very good and Mr. Doone gave a fine performance as the dancer Death. The words of the choruses were not always audible, but only experience and many rehearsals can cure this defect. The theatre was full, the audience enthusiastic, and there will be another performance next Sunday night.

"Julius Caesar"

On a large modern stage *Julius Caesar* needs a firm grasp by the producer if it is not to seem diffuse as drama. If it is to be a pageant, on the other hand, then Shakespeare must go to the winds and merely boost up the scenic effect with his lines. The Alhambra production is irritating because pageant and drama obtrude alternately without ever uniting. Lightning flashes and thunder rolls convincingly, and the stars in Brutus's orchard are bright and numerous behind the cypress trees. The pageant is pretty, if rather shoddy: the drama has excellent moments, but no sort of continuity. The mainstay of the evening is Mr. Godfrey Tearle's Antony. He solves the problem confronting all Antonys of being at once popular and distinguished. The Forum scene is well managed, except that we ought to know the letter as well as the spirit of the crowd's interruptions. Mr. Tearle is stirring when he is out-shouting the rabble, but the strain on his vocal chords is excessive. The gentleman in Mr. Basil Gill's Brutus always has the upper hand of the artist and this, while it wrecks his relations with Caesar, serves to bring to life the tent-scene with Cassius, and that allows a last-act crescendo from which the play can die away to its litter of corpses and (in Mr. Stanley Bell's rather self-consciously poetic production) its rustle of dry leaves. The music of Mr. Norman O'Neill is too prominent and repetitive.

Katherine Parr

Henry VIII, we now realise, can be a perfect scream when rightly handled; there is, moreover, money in him. Without questioning too deeply the motives which inspired the writing of *The Queen Who Kept Her Head*, at the Kingsway, one can at least assume that no dazzling, illuminating flash of historical interpretation was involved. The comic ogre in his crudity suffices, and the twists and turns by which Katherine is shown defeating his murderous whims are correspondingly naive. There is some little dramatic interest in her Protestant intrigues, but

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even that is spoilt by the childlike machinations of her enemies, Gardiner and Wriothesley, stage villains of the silliest. Miss Laura Cowie takes her opportunities gratefully and defends untenable positions gallantly. Mr. Raymond Lovell grunts and kicks his toes out humorously as Henry, and Miss April Vivian as the Princess Elizabeth behaves winsomely, wantonly—and, it must be confessed, distressingly.

La Compagnie des Quinze

André Obey's *Don Juan* which the Compagnie des Quinze have chosen for the opening of their season at the Globe Theatre is hardly a great play, but it has merits of its own apart from its suitability as a vehicle for the particular powers of these actors. It is warm-hearted and tremblingly alive, and in technique it is both original and interesting. Time and space are telescoped, so that at one moment the stage forms an intimate meeting-place for two of the characters, and at another, without any change of scene, it holds all the paraphernalia of an elaborate symbolic drama. The passing of years is indicated by the movements across the stage of a watchman, and the total impression is that the progress of time has been arrested now and again for us to witness significant episodes. This is done without loss of unity, and without any affectation. The defects of the play are defects not of manner but of material. This Juan is convincing enough but not sublime enough. Only occasionally does his fear of death, and his temporary liquidation of it in love, seem anything more than a foible. However, M. Pierre Fresnay and the rest of the company find in the play an excellent medium for their art. It is an art in which simplicity and grace result from extreme stylisation. There is nothing accidental or instinctive about this acting. Tender, almost naive as it is in effect, there is not a gesture or an intonation that is out of place. Everything is calculated, and it is just this calculation, by which each member of the company knows precisely the capacities and intentions of the others, that accounts for their brilliant "team-work." In their hands even a bad play (and this one is by no means bad) would not be dull to watch.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, March 2nd—

National Pony Show, Royal Agricultural Hall.
"The Country Wife," Ambassadors Theatre.
Busch Quartet, Wigmore Hall, 8.30.
B.B.C. Chamber Concert, Broadcasting House, 8.30.

SATURDAY, March 3rd—

Robert Mayer Concert for Children, Central Hall, Westminster, 11.
Rugby Football. Royal Navy *v.* The Army, Twickenham.
League of Arts Choir, conducted by Dr. Geoffrey Shaw, Victoria and Albert Museum, 3.

SUNDAY, March 4th—

John A. Hobson on "The Reformation of Democracy," Conway Hall, 11.
Kreisler, Albert Hall. 3.
Mrs. G. D. H. Cole on "A Socialist London," Willoughby Hall, 1 Willoughby Road, Hampstead, 7.30.
South London (Morley College) Orchestra, conducted by Michael Tippett, Morley College, 8.15.
"The Doll's House," Arts Theatre.
"Fog Over Dybern," Grafton Theatre.

TUESDAY, March 6th—

Prof. Arthur Newell on "Is America Recovering," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
Dr. E. Graham Howe on "The Fulfilment of the Law," Friends House, Euston Road, 5.45.
Dr. C. P. Blacker on "The Aim of Eugenics," Conway Hall, 7.
Cortot, Queen's Hall, 8.15.

WEDNESDAY, March 7th—

J. Middleton Murry on "Marxism and the Individual," The Council Chamber, Denison House, 296 Vauxhall Bridge Road, 8.
Dr. Norman Haire on "The Sexual Problems of Everyday Life," London School of Hygiene, Keppel Street, 8.

THURSDAY, March 8th—

H. Wickham Steed on "The Italian Revolution," Bedford College, 5.15.
H. W. Nevinson on "Parliament," City Literary Institute, Goldsmith Street, Drury Lane, 7.30.
"The Love Potion," Birkbeck College Theatre, 8; and on March 9th and 10th.
Miss Ella Sharpe on "On Leaving Home," 36 Gloucester Place, 8.30.
Eleanor Marshall, Song Recital, Conway Hall, 8.45.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

HAMLET'S imagination, working "too curiously," led him "to trace the noble dust of Alexander till he find it stopping a bunghole." The romantic imagination commonly reverses this chain of thought and from a handful of dust evokes the conqueror of the world, or, starting off in the wholesale line, watches the clay of the ploughed fields rise up, put on flesh, the flesh breathe and put on armour, and the armed hosts move and rush upon each other with sword and shield, with bow and spear like the Cadmean offspring. Such visions have always haunted battlefields, or what we know are battlefields, since former races of men must have slaughtered each other in many now forgotten, peaceful places. I myself only remember having been on two great battlefields—the interminable ribbon of the Marne, the site of which, seen less than a year after the battle, was drawn, with many thousands of new tawdry crosses, over the fields and through the woods and along the roads of France. To read that landscape needed less romantic imagination than is required to understand a map of Metroland. Not to have imagination was there more than a selfish wish, it was a pre-requisite of work and life. The other great battlefield I have seen is the much monumented plain of Gettysburg—on which I could not look without vivid and inaccurate pictures of furious battle, clouds of smoke and desperate charges passing before my mind. I was with a friend who knew the details of that appalling three days' carnage—my eyes followed where he pointed—down that lane of open country, between those woods, Pickett's division had charged and died. But the dimly apprehended vision vanished: the present rolled back upon us thunderously. In lorries and great municipal dust-carts, singing and shouting and convoyed by cops on motor cycles, came the Bonus army which Hoover had chased out of Washington the day before. Yet that pitiable stream of poverty, cupidity and folly, which lacked all discipline or dignity, by their unexpected passage, did bring home the strange actions and mass-movements of mankind: gathered together in 1917 and 1918 for the war, the great majority of these veterans had never been in battle or crossed the sea, yet still they clustered, like the lumps of shivering bees that get left behind when the swarm has flown away or the queen is dead. Like all armies they carried an enormous amount of baggage. One party in an ancient Ford car was towing a buggy in which a mule was tied: its great ears wagged pitifully and below its rump, chalked upon the lurching tailboard, was the inscription: Wilson's Heroes: Hoover's Hoboes.

* * *

I have been reminded of that double picture, of the imagined past made astonishingly vivid by the present, and I have described it here, because it is just such experiences and such contrasts that form the subject of *In the Dark Backward* by Henry Nevinson (Routledge, 10*s*. 6*d*.). In his introduction, Nevinson, who has always seemed to me the noblest romantic of his generation, explains that he has always led a double life "that implied living in two different ages at the same time":

> At any minute and in any place this consciousness of being, not in two places, but in two times at the same time, may come upon us. During the troubles in Dublin, whilst I was in the midst of the bombardment and burning of the Four Courts, and the whole city was crackling with deadly conflict, I felt myself equally present with Swift in St. Patrick's Deanery . . . tramping to and fro for many hours a day in his large room, his memory quite gone, his noble indignation, his courageous passion for freedom, and his superb intelligence all quite gone, and the populace in terror or derision, peering at him through the tall iron railings.

In the seventeen chapters of this book, he gives us such evocations of his imagination, scenes of the past which were so real to him that they impinged upon his surroundings giving them something of the strangeness and meaning of photographs which have suffered a double exposure.

* * *

Many of these scenes or visions came to Nevinson upon the battlefield, and one may think that to travel back through time, to earlier scenes of cruelty and of violence, served as a stoic consolation for all the ugliness of death and hatefulness of suffering by which he was surrounded. Thus the first scene describes how, while quartered on *The River Clyde* beached at Gallipoli, he would climb up among the sandbags of the upper works to look at the view of Troy, and think of the beached ships, of the Greeks scouring the country for food, of Hector's death and of his child torn away from Andromache to be slaughtered. And similarly he turned with a something that may have been weariness and boredom (for one cannot use the word disdain of Nevinson) from the time-table routine work of a war-correspondent in France, accompanying H.M. King George on a visit to the front, and found it a relief to walk the fields of Agincourt and live over a battle in which an English king had fought dismounted in the mud and had had a piece of the crown about his helmet clipped off by a Frenchman's sword.

* * *

These visions are not, I think, for the historian: they are, I suspect, as inaccurate in detail as they are unequal in merit, and one of them, which describes meeting Milton in Aldersgate, it is better not to read and not to speak of. But if there are bad passages the fine things far outnumber them, and many pages are extremely moving. The whole description of the Battle of Jena could not be better, coming as it does after a picture of his student days in Germany, when young Nevinson played the part of a fleet Westmorland hare, and also of whipper-in, to a pack of German students, like tubby beagles whom he had infected with his love of cross-country running. And its ending gives a picture of Goethe, whose house was occupied after the battle by drunken troops, but who said afterwards:

> How could I have written songs of hate without hatred. . . . How could I, to whom civilisation and barbarism are the only two differences of importance, hate a nation which is one of the most civilised on earth?

Jena-Auerstadt: the destruction of Prussia! As one reads of that slaughter, it is difficult not to feel oneself travelling, full of terror, into the future and seeing another Jena—with maybe a worse ending for the world—rushing to meet one. But another Goethe: it seems idle to hope for him from Germany.

* * *

In one of the essays Nevinson quotes Wordsworth's line:

> Have I not reason to lament
> What man has made of man?

And it is that reflection which dominates these pictures. The thought that underlies many passages is expressed thus:

> In reading the narrative of these cruelties, we must often wonder how or why the human race has survived. For no kind of bird or beast is so cruel, even the cat only practising cruelty to keep her powers alert.

But though that is the dominant mood, Nevinson is also a man of action: war stirs him deeply; and his best pictures are of the clash of battle or the rout of defeated troops. In describing Prince Charlie's march through Westmorland and dash to Derby, he tells us of his home and speaks with pride of that "generous highwayman," John Nevinson, who robbed a coach in Surrey and rode on one horse, in one day, to York where he played bowls with the Mayor, by which feat he established an alibi. And part of Nevinson's regret, as he looks at the violence of the present, and of the past, is that his heart will not let him play that sort of violent part. A flavour of regret, of racial instinct thwarted by nobility, shows itself sometimes in the faces of north-country sheep-dogs, they busy themselves to save the crag-fast sheep, the feeble lambs, but a faint memory of the wolf glows regretfully in their eyes.

DAVID GARNETT

ACCIDIE

Magpie. By LOIS VIDAL. *Faber and Faber.* 12*s.* 6*d.*

Autobiography, like every other literary form, has its own laws, without which it becomes incontinent and therefore disgusting and unconvincing. Perhaps the most important of these laws is the necessity for the writer to be uniform and consistent in the degree of self-revelation adopted throughout the book. Goethe's *Poetry and Truth* and Mr. Yeats's *Autobiographies* both obey this law. The former gives us a vast narrative of apparent matter of factness; the latter an intense narrative of seeming candour. Both great artists adopted their attitude in the beginning and stuck to it.

In a humbler and less clear-sighted way, Miss Vidal does the same thing. By consistent half-explanation she creates a world of her own which the reader is persuaded to accept. It is not a world in which one can see all the facts. Its events are magnified and distorted through a steam-haze of fantasy. But that fantasy remains unbroken throughout, so that the distortions are harmonious, and become in themselves part of the adventure which the reader is asked to share. They assume, as the book proceeds, more and more importance as the writer shifts her consciousness toward them and away from actuality. But the shifting is not so violent as to disturb the tone of the book.

To begin with the incidents of this author's nomadic life. They are interesting enough apart altogether from the veil through which they are shown. She was one of a large family in a country vicarage near Haileybury. The record of this period is good golden-age-of-childhood stuff, with the detail of place, people and day-dreams convincingly presented.

The family got to university age, and began to scatter. War-time completed the process, killing the most beloved brother, and bringing the author four years of war-work similar to that so well described in Irene Rathbone's *We That Were Young*. After the Armistice Miss Vidal found that she could not settle down. Overwork, grief, and shock had unsettled her. She was not disillusioned. She later became a Roman Catholic; and at the time of writing this book she still referred to the Germans as Huns. Some other element had intervened; and that element is what makes the story interesting and at the same time elusive and fantasy-veiled.

We begin to look back over the story and to realise that it is mainly a record of neurotic and even psychic conditions, beginning with the father's alienation during the author's girlhood, and ending—well, not convincingly ending, with her marriage in 1931 or 1932. Between these events Miss Vidal's life was as rhythmical as the ten waves of the sea. One period of activity followed another, until with the heavy "decuman billow" her vitality collapsed, and she sank into that spiritual torpor which the mediaeval schoolmen called *Accidie*.

At every period of her life when this recurred, the symptoms were the same; relinquishment of responsibility, complete lack of emotional or intellectual response to the stimulus of environment; revolt against the mother and sister on whom she was so emotionally dependent when normal. During these relapses she craved to return to the mental home where she had first been shut up. The lingering after-moods of these illnesses prevented her ever from settling down; and so we find this quick, intuitive intellectual knocking about the world as governess, journalist, charwoman, housemaid in Corsica, laundry hand, and inmate of a horrible "Home of Rest" run by the Salvation Army; interspersed with these adventures are various love affairs, made extraordinarily complicated and sophisticated by the conditions of the author's emotional position midway between reality and fantasy. The physical approaches of love seem always to have found her unprepared and incredulous. In consequence they brought no easing of the nervous tension, no healthy relinquishment of self. The story grows more and more depressing as the author leaves youth behind. The fantasy is more obscurant, the facts more sordid.

But in spite of this, the reader is forced to rejoice in the increasing consciousness of the author, her spiritual triumph over the recurring deaths-in-life which have cut her off from a normal social integration and from a coherent job of life-work. One agrees with the diagnosis of the priest who helped her during one of her bouts of this terrible *accidie*. He said to her "You are a happy one—that's where you should set your face. Towards the happy ones, towards the light, that *is* your heritage. All this gloom is only a disease, not native to you."

That is the impression left by the book. In spite of one indetermination after another, this life through its author's relation has been a happy one, rich with a personality that has shone out, even when shrouded with the glooms imposed by neurosis.

RICHARD CHURCH

A LANDSCAPE OF ANGRY NIGHT

The Nettle and the Flower. By KENNETH MUIR. *Oxford University Press.* 5*s.*

Mr. Kenneth Muir's book of verse has more nettle in it than flower; but rather like the nettle it will not sting you if you catch hold firmly. Grip it and it will agreeably grip you, for the poems are curiously lucid and alive. Yet there is much against it. Some of the book's best lines and phrases are not Mr. Muir's own (e.g., "with the light that never was on sea or land" and "the world's great age begins anew") and it suffers from "minority cult" poison-gas. Ghosts of outlawed Victorian poets and the most recent of the youthful moderns chase one another through its star-tormented pages. Stranger still, Auden (mentioned by name) sits down with Shelley; and from that coupling and the general tone of impatience and rebellion one feels that Mr. Kenneth Muir would not hesitate to rank the second James Thomson (one of the ghosts) with Milton or Shakespeare. He calls the decalogue "sordid," and muddles up good and evil. He denounces the system which taught him his fine lucid English, and in the next breath slights the soldier-men who prevented the Germans from imposing a more tyrannous one:

> Empires have crumbled as we grew:
> And while we fagged and played the fool,
> Acquiring ignorance at school,
> The world's great age began anew.
>
> A million men or so were slain
> For reasons I have quite forgotten,
> And since their bodies now are rotten,
> They, at least, will not complain.

The stanzas do not exemplify Mr. Muir at his best, but rather at his most typical. He is too passionate and plangent to hope to get read by the modernists, and too dark and rebellious to invite praise from "Georgian" traditionalists. Moreover, he sometimes writes lyrically—like this:

> Exquisite and rare
> The last notes fall upon
> The soft, gold-candled air—
> They fade, they die, they are gone

which will make the disciples of Eliot cry out "Gaw blimey! What a miss for Edward Marsh!"

The best thing about the book is its loud, energetic rage, its fury of invective, and the way it heaves bricks at everything stupid or rotten in modern civilisation. Though Mr. Kenneth Muir has more darkness in him than light, and some of the bricks hit cathedral windows, nobody who admires rhythmical energy will ask him to desist.

HERBERT PALMER

NEW NOVELS

Within This Present. By MARGARET AYER BARNES. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d*

Its Silly Face. By NIKOLAI GUBSKY. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

In a Province. By LAURENS VAN DER POST. *Hogarth Press.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

The Spring Begins. By KATHERINE DUNNING. *Cobden-Sanderson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

There is a certain type of novel that begins at the dinner-table. Candles are lit; finger-bowls and napkins—usually of the finest damask—have been duly set out; mahogany—it is always mahogany—shines with a lustre that bespeaks centuries of inherited civilisation; and grandfather and Uncle Somebody and old Aunt Somebody Else, with cousins, nephews and grandchildren as dramatic foil—they represent the slowly maturing forces of change—are assembled around the patriarchal board. After such an opening, we realise what is likely to follow—a carefully, indeed lovingly, written study of the conflict between youth and age, between modernism and traditional sentiment; a book in which, even at the height of emotional crisis, the candles

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Here are two letters—received on the same day—which give point to these statements.

The first is from a well-known M.P.—the second is from an Overseas reader of "The New Statesman."

The M.P.'s letter says:—

DEAR SIR MAX,—I have just been busy with Income Tax forms, and it may interest you to know that my journalistic earnings for the Income Tax year ended April 5th, 1933, were £382. I am hoping that if the present year continues as it has gone so far, the figure will be nearly doubled in the 1934 return. This does not seem so bad in view of the necessarily limited time my Parliamentary and other duties have permitted me to give to it. Now that I have written that it occurs to me that the facts may be of some use to the School of Journalism, particularly as my earnings prior to being in contact with you were negligible.

The second letter says:—

DEAR SIR,—Many thanks for allowing me to submit an extra story. I am going to take advantage of your generosity and enclose one that has afforded me pleasure to write.

May I tell you that I took this course by way of a hobby and an experiment? The possibility of turning it to financial gain was not my primary object.

Now that the course is drawing to a close I wish you to know that it has interested me beyond expectation. It has afforded me great pleasure and taught me some valuable lessons.

Firstly—I have learned to like and appreciate the short story, a form of literature I formerly disliked.

Secondly—My English, I feel convinced, has improved.

Thirdly—I now know that any attempt on my part to burst into print without taking the course would have been futile.

To anyone with some imagination and a literary bent I would say, "Take the course," for, apart from mercenary considerations, it is an education and a real joy.

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will still shine, the polished table top still glimmer and family feeling continue to dominate the narrative. So it is in the work of Miss Margaret Barnes. On the first page, "Mr. Horace Sewall . . . pushed back his carved armchair, placed his damask napkin on the row of forks beside his Royal Crown Derby plate, picked up his champagne glass and rose to his feet"; while "the eyes of Sally, his sixteen-year-old daughter, met those of her grandmother across the candlelit table with a little gleam of half-humorous, half-deprecatory sympathy."

That gleam, how filial—but how significant! Sally Sewall is the nicest sort of heroine; the gleam that had kindled in her eye when papa rose to his feet to drink grandmamma's health, and which grandmamma—the old rebel!—affectionately answered, never narrowed to a wink or a sardonic leer. There is nothing subversive about this book. That the world is changing, that bankers who rode the boom have now experienced the slump, and that the family dinner-tables of Chicago millionaires, solid, cultured and aristocratic in their own way, are less elegantly appointed than of yore, is brought home to us in the latter part of the story. The family bank is closed down and the family humbled; but Sally herself remains the virginal, faintly humorous, somewhat conservative young creature—essentially a personage of patrician descent—to whom we were introduced when the story opened. After a time, this air of breeding becomes rather tedious. I find it difficult to believe in fictitious characters whose recognition that they belong to a particular clan is as deep-rooted as the sense of their personal existence; and—perhaps because I have never encountered such a family—their pious obsession is apt to strike me as literary humbug.

Yet Miss Barnes has written an honest and lively book. Here, with special reference to Sally, her two little boys and Alan MacLeod, her husband, whom she married when very young in a fit of war-time enthusiasm, is a picture of American society from 1914 to the inauguration of President Roosevelt. Some of its most interesting chapters are devoted to an analysis of the state of mind—restless, nervous, at moments almost hysterical, though in the midst of plenty—that prevailed in prosperous American circles before the edifice of prosperity had begun to crack. Its effects were both social and individual; Granny shook her head over banking methods of which Grandfather, who swore by railroad-stock and farm-mortgages, would never have approved; while Sally, estranged by her husband's egoism, his automaton-like acceptance of financial slavery—his heart was in the office or on the stock-market, and his scanty leisure given up to meaningless gaddings—heaved the restrained but audible sighs of an embittered wife.

The pair drifted apart, but were re-united. From the point of view of the cynical reader, Alan and Sally MacLeod would seem to have made a matrimonial mountain—which it takes them and their creator several hundred pages to get round—out of an inoffensive amatory molehill. After sympathising at some length with Sally's jealous misery, with the pangs that wracked Alan's divided spirit, it is a trifle exasperating to discover that Alan's infidelity had never been more than theoretical and that some element was lacking from his composition "that has to be in the men who—who go in for that sort of experience." Alan was a monogamist *malgré lui*; but neither Sally nor her husband are as convincing as the background against which they move, and it is on this background—now and then a little overcrowded with the accessories so dear to every female novelist, cut flowers, chintz, pale yellow tea gowns, gate-legged tables and polished copper pots—that Miss Barnes has expended considerable skill.

Whereas Miss Barnes writes of a society that she would appear to know from long and intimate acquaintance, Mr. Nikolai Gubsky, in *Its Silly Face*, writes of surroundings that he has only come to know during recent years. For Mr. Gubsky is a Russian, who has acquired English. His previous novel, *Foreign Bodies*, the story of the Kurtcheninov family and of their attempts, comic and heroic, to adapt themselves to the rigours of English life, was an uncommonly amusing and readable book. His new book, however, is disappointing; the hero, an Anglo-Russian intellectual married to a Russian wife, undertakes, among other somewhat lengthily described activities, a study of the comparative merits of the English and the Russian novel, in which he asserts that, while "English writing is static," Russian fiction is "dynamic . . ." Well, by this standard, *Its Silly Face* is typically British; the narrative flags; it includes many fragments of acute observation and the rather shadowy forms of several interesting and persuasive characters; yet, on the whole, it is an unexciting piece of work. Events occur, but the style never changes tempo; it conveys no feeling of emotional development. Subsidiary characters are lightly, sometimes crudely, sketched in, and the comic verve that enlivened *Foreign Bodies* is entirely absent from this gloomy and monotonous chronicle.

In the last episode Gorya commits suicide. Disgusted by the silly face of bourgeois society, disappointed in his efforts to obtain a post under the Soviet Government, he blew his brains out and abandoned his wife to the friend who loved her. As a social being, he had tumbled between two stools; the established order, represented by English middle-class society—at its grimmest in a northern seaport town—he could not find it in his soul to admire or acknowledge, while Communism had shocked his civilised susceptibilities . . . Gorya's predicament bears a certain resemblance to that of van Bredepoel, the hero of *In a Province*, a moving and cleverly constructed study of racial conflict by Mr. Laurens van der Post. Johan van Bredepoel was a Dutch South African; brought up by his uncle and aunt to despise all "Kaffirs," he developed, nevertheless, a deep and admiring sympathy for Kenon, the young negro, who had left his father's hut to work among white men, in a modern industrial town. The story traces Kenon's downfall, which coincides with—and is, to some extent, the cause of—van Bredepoel's emancipation from racial prejudice. Yet van Bredepoel, too, stops short at Communism; resenting the arrogance of the white races, he is appalled by the prospect of bloodshed and hatred that, "out of their love of the oppressed," the champions of the coloured peoples seem to be fostering, and dies with his moral dilemma still unresolved. His tragedy—shared by many intellectuals—is an abhorrence both of the disease and of the specific.

The three foregoing novels are essays in conflict—between tradition and change; between the individual and a society in which he feels that he has no appointed place; between an intelligent and sensitive young man and the forces of intolerance and hatred that, on both sides, threaten to engulf him. With Miss Dunning, we return to a simpler theme; when *The Spring Begins*, snowdrops (Miss Dunning tells us) push up in a nursemaid's heart; the head-gardener, like a large horticultural spider, weaves his web for cook's comely assistant; and in the constricted bosom of the nursery governess, at the Vicarage, suppressed desires claim their painful right to live. . . . Of these materials, Miss Dunning has built her story. Three young women find the fruition that they deserve; the guileful gardener snips the firstlings of feminine innocence. It makes a pleasant and curiously vivid little narrative, written in an uncomplicated and easy prose.

PETER QUENNELL

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A Quaker Journal (1804-1861). By WILLIAM LUCAS OF HITCHIN. Vol. I. *Hutchinson.* 18*s.*

William Lucas was born in 1804; and it was in 1860, the year before his death, that he felt "an inclination to note down a few of the occurrences which dwell in my memory of the half century over which my recollection extends." He was a Quaker by faith and a brewer by profession—by no means so strange a combination as it would seem to-day. He had been educated in Hitchin, first at a Dame's school, then at "Old Dyers in Tiler's Street," Dyer being "a good specimen of the old-fashioned pedagogue"—very like, in fact, a stray character of Dickens. "I should not be doing my duty to your parents," he would say, "if I past such conduct by unpunished; hold out your hand, you infamous brat." Later, he was sent to a school kept by one Joel Lean at Fishponds, near Bristol, and leaving there in 1819, "went at once to a chemist in the Haymarket, London, and after six weeks' trial was duly bound apprentice for five years and a half. The premium paid was £250." For that modest sum he was privileged to live in a little dark, dirty room at the back of the shop with a "succession of swearing, gin-drinking, thieving, canting, ugly old women"; to eat workhouse food, to sleep in the attic in a bed swarming with bugs, to be in the shop from 9 in the morning till 9 at night, and in his turn for a week at a time from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. All this seems to have been curious preparation for becoming a country brewer. At any rate, he concluded his apprenticeship, presumably in 1825, though there is a gap in the journal between 1825 and 1829, the diary beginning again with a series of lively and charming letters from France and the Rhine. Whether this was merely a holiday or a survival of the Grand Tour, or merely a device for studying the methods of German brewers, Lucas does not say. There is another gap in the journal

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between 1829 and 1834, when he sets forth, by post and railroad, to tour the Lakes. In 1837 he goes off on "a flying-tour" to North Wales. In 1840 he tours Scotland. Between these excursions he takes his family to Brighton, spends a few days in London, brews his beer in Hitchin, attends the quarterly meetings, takes a day's fishing, goes to a sale or the Royal Academy or to a tulip show. In 1841 he tours Wales again and parts of Yorkshire.

And so it goes on—an interesting and varied life, full of diverse interests, quiet but not dull, provincial but not narrow, cultured but not snobbish. Setting aside the tours to the Rhine and Wales and the Lakes and Scotland, it is an adventure in little things. To Lucas an incident was not insignificant because it was slight. The day is warm, the first swallow has come, the nightingale sings in his garden, the wheat is being carried, the wind is south-west—they were all little things which seemed to him great enough to be recorded. And posterity has confirmed his judgment, for these are the very things which now, a hundred years later, give his journal so much of its freshness and life. His interests are very catholic. Macaulay has an article in *The Quarterly Review*, Dickens is issuing *The Pickwick Papers*, the House of Commons is divided on the Ministerial Church Rate Bill, Wombwell's menagerie arrives, he is enraged by the first assessments for income tax—there is a note or a sentence or a page about them all. The arrival of *The Quarterly Review* is important—but not more important than the coming of the wryneck. Little scraps of family history are put down side by side with his comments on "the revision of import duties." He grows a little excited about the anti-slavery campaign, but not more excited than he grows over the planting of some trees—"Finished planting my new clump at Orton Head Common. The ladies have taken all their share. J. Lister planted all the poplars. Christiana Lucas all the chestnuts, Sarah Lucas the Mountain Ash, and Phoebe Lucas the Abel Poplars."

The book is, in short, a sketch history of his life and times, in every way fresh and delightful. The dry, witty drawings by Samuel Lucas, his better-known brother, are exactly what the book needs. The absence of an index is the one irritating point, but doubtless that omission will be rectified in the second volume.

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DAVID GARNETT in the *Statesman*

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STUDIES FROM THE SOUTH SEAS

Religious and Cosmic Beliefs of Central Polynesia. By R. W. WILLIAMSON. Two vols. *Cambridge University Press.* 50s.

Modern Samoa, Its Government and Changing Life. By FELIX M. KEESING. *George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.* 16s.

The religious beliefs and the cosmogony of the natives of the Polynesian islands are collected for Central Polynesia in Mr. Williamson's two volumes. This cosmogony is in the grand manner. It gives an order of precedence for the beginnings of things. From "nothing" proceeds "smell," from this proceeds "smoke," from "smoke," "clouds," and from clouds, solid land. Rocks and other things mate, and, through a genealogical tree of material matings, gods and men are finally born. As religious belief or philosophy, this order of the emergence of things possibly does as well as any to express in the believer a sense of mystery. Polynesians attach the greatest importance to the genealogical validation of rank and precedence in everyday life. In less practical matters, such as the literary form of their cosmogony, they naturally give to beginnings and mysteries a genealogical form.

Mr. Williamson has written concerning the interpretation of these tales of gods and men. He concludes that the god Maui is a volcano god connected with a belief that the home of the soul after death is in an underworld, while Tane, god of forests, Tangaloa, god of the ocean, and others are connected with a belief that the home of the soul after death is in the sky or over the sea. This connection is not evident, but is a correspondence. There are upper world gods, and a volcano god. There are upper world homes for the dead, and a lower world home. The Polynesians do not believe that the souls of the dead join the gods. Meanwhile, Mr. Williamson suggests that the gods and spirit homes of the upper world really belonged to one people, while the god and spirit home of the lower world really belonged to another people with whom in historical times there was a mixture.

This theory can hardly be accepted as we have not any genuine historical record of such a mixture. The mythology is the shadow of class distinction for the most part. An upper class went as souls of the dead to the upper spirit home, and a commoner class to the lower spirit home. It has been argued that classes are typically a product of conquest, but in cases where no historical records are available, nothing can be said about this. In the New Guinea littoral the reviewer found mythology of a mountain spirit home for the souls of the dead of unblemished physique, an underground, or rather under morass, home for the souls of the dead of disease blemished physique, and an over the sea home for the souls of the dead whose corpses were eaten by enemies. The idea of separate homes for the souls of separate classes of dead is prevalent from Malayia to the Marquesas, and the classes of dead concerned are by no means always such social classes as might conceivably be the product of the conquest of one people by another.

However, this apart, Mr. Williamson has produced an excellent work of reference on Central Polynesian mythology. The documentation is full and scholarly, and it will serve to guide later students of the same subject.

Mr. Keesing's book on *Modern Samoa* is in the strictest historical tradition. It contains a digest of official documents, missionary records, and it is informed also by a good working knowledge of present-day conditions amongst Europeans and natives gained on the spot.

For many years anthropologists, beginning in England with Haddon, have stressed the facts of the strong resistance shown by native cultures to change. Administrators, missionaries and settlers in native regions have always demanded some change in accommodation to themselves, and native conservatism has had to be overcome with something stronger and more brutal than tact. Some of us are beginning to realise now that it is little use deploring the universal presence of something more than tact, or of the unwholesome condition of the primitive native societies who are under control, compared with their relatively healthy condition when they are still happy in their own devices. This fact is evident to those of us who know something of both conditions. The real point, however, emerging is whether punitive and bullying measures are objectionable because they do not secure their effect in breaking down the resistance of native society as they are designed to, or whether they are drastic enough to secure their ends.

A Reply to the German Embassy...

"Professor Banse is described in German biographical books as having become a member of the National Socialist party in October, 1932, National Socialist expert in military science in the Wehrpolitischesamt (politico-military bureau) of the National Socialist party, holder of the first chair in military science in the technical high school (a technical high school is equivalent to a university college) at Brunswick, and the author of books on 'Geographie und Wehrwille' (Geography and Defence) and 'Wehrwissenschaft' (Military Science)."—MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

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Mr. Keesing's book does not answer the question yet for Samoa and indeed could not, for Samoan history has not yet come to a turning point. The present situation in Western Samoa is a violent return to native conservatism, a disuse of the facilities of a health campaign which had begun very promisingly earlier, a reaction against being made into wards of Government, which would over-educate them and then turn them back on their own economic resources again. This resistance in the native culture appears to have been increased rather than overcome by the open fray which took place at one point. Mr. Keesing's study makes these facts evident. It is a dispassionate account. It is an excellently exhaustive history of a century of contact of the European and the Samoan civilisations which should be read by all who are interested in the problems created by the settling of the heavy arm of European civilisation on small but independent native civilisations. It is a new type of study and good with very little guide in precedent.

R. F. FORTUNE

THE IRISH PEASANTS' POLITICS

War For the Land in Ireland. BRIAN O'NEILL with Introduction by PEADAR O'DONNELL. *Lawrence.* 5s.

The Englishman who has read a thousand superfluous books about Ireland will yet do well to read this one; unless he has read James Connolly's *Labour in Ireland* it will be a new experience. It is a contemporary document, explaining what is happening now and what is likely to happen, and this more clearly by recorded facts and cited documents than by the theses the author consciously expounds. For example, in the generalisations of Mr. O'Donnell's introduction there is nothing so illuminating as the account of his actions given on p. 108 by Mr. O'Neill. Mr. O'Donnell had been addressing public meetings throughout 1923–27 condemning, among other impositions on the people, the Annuities. In 1927 Mr. O'Donnell's brother and three other men were charged with an armed raid on the agency of the Marquis of Conyngham's estate, removing rents and destroying documents and accounts. The week-end following these arrests Mr. O'Donnell made the following comments at a public meeting in the district. "These blood accounts are locked up in a faraway town: they disappear. The robber's lists of claims disappear. You will remember the laugh that swept through the Rosses. Rory of the Hill could still stretch out his hand and help the people. . . ." Now organisation was the pressing need, he said: "There are keen-eared, foxy creatures here listening to hear me say straight out to you 'Don't pay annuities, don't pay rents.' It annoys them that speakers always say 'Don't starve yourselves to pay annuities. Don't starve yourselves to pay rents.' I say that again to-day. Our organisation now is on that basis. When the organisation spreads to include other factors we will deal with the new situation." When charged with conspiracy and incitement he made this explanation to the Dublin Court: "I told the people that they themselves had the first right to live off the produce of their labour, and that where rents could only be paid by starving the children they should not be paid. Take the case of the O'Sullivan family in Cork this week, where father, mother and two children died of starvation: should the payment of annuities be allowed to cause the death by starvation of children? I have asked each townland so to organise that when the bailiff loots the byre supplies of milk to that home will continue. I have asked people not to buy seized cattle or to help in shipping them." Despite vigorous work by the State prosecutor and the judge, a Dublin jury—shopmen with little love for peasants—acquitted O'Donnell. It was clear to the professional politicians, Mr. Cosgrave and Mr. De Valera, that they must take annuities into their programmes.

This is a sample of the real force that clerical, Nationalist or Labour politicians in Ireland must always harness or ride to make their careers. The best part of this little book consists of such documents, explaining the course of the Irish social struggle for the last two hundred years. A striking parallel is the origin of the Land League—a spontaneous meeting of protest in 1879 against the rack-rents of a parish priest, Canon Burke; addressed by Michael Davitt much as Peadar O'Donnell speaks; condemned by the clerical authorities as Mr. O'Donnell is; embarrassing the constitutional politician Parnell exceedingly, it grew and flourished until he realised that expedient use of the social revolt would take him far. That story, with slight variations, appears in most of the documents quoted here. This book is not a suave job produced by two Fabian typewriters beating as one: Mr. O'Neill is an active young Communist, and Mr. O'Donnell, although he has found time to put out two or three novels through Jonathan Cape, has been shot at least twice and arrested frequently. The material in this book should dispel misconceptions now current in England. The British public seems to believe that the aim of Irish revolutionaries was to secure for our provincial British politicians a voice in government job patronage, control of the police and Dominion levies—green uniformed, of course, and provided with plenty of Catholic chaplains—and since the Coalition Government in 1922 agreed with our leaders on a deal of that sort, the continued unrest in Ireland is judged to be mere wanton perversity.

A CENTURY TOO LATE

The Tolpuddle Martyrs. By MARJORIE FIRTH and ARTHUR HOPKINSON. With a Foreword by the Rt. Hon. WALTER ELLIOT, M.P. *Hopkinson.* 3s. 6d.

All the world knows by now, if it did not a year ago, that in 1834 six Dorsetshire labourers were arrested for enrolling men into a Trade Union, were charged with administering unlawful oaths, and were sentenced to the outrageous term of seven years' transportation. From this event the British Trade Union movement has chosen to date its inception; Congress is holding special festivals this year in Dorchester to celebrate the event. That the Trade Unionists should wish to celebrate is comprehensible: it is more surprising that Conservatives should wish to do so. Yet that they do, this strange book is proof. Mr. Elliot, in his cautious preface, merely remarks that things have improved greatly since 1834, but the authors are more explicit about their purpose in writing. "Already," they say, "there are murmurings of a desire to exploit the crime against the Tolpuddle labourers for party purposes." To silence these murmurings of desire, these amorous *roucoulements* from Transport House, the authors have produced one of the oddest books ever sponsored by a Conservative minister. Its style is platitudinous varied by startling metaphor—"now the pall of frustration was thrown over the dead bones of hope: it was a grim spectre which stalked from

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village to village." Its philosophy is an almost witless pretence that everyone may, by some means or other, be considered blameless. The overseers in Australia, we are told, do "seem to have been brutal men," which might indeed have been inferred from their "flogging the prisoners if they did but raise their heads for a moment from their toil." But, stay, the explanation comes! "No doubt their own nerves were frayed by long hours in the heat." Miss Firth, or Mr. Hopkinson, adds the even more convincing suggestion that their "feelings were blunted by constant association with hardened criminals" who understand, of course, no language but the whip.

Of the 140 pages not forty are concerned with the actual history of the Tolpuddle labourers. The rest are filled up by general reflections, by a discursive account of the times (but a very inadequate account) and by such curious devices as that used on page eleven, where the authors inquire whether it would be useful to compare the Dorchester sentence with Jeffreys' Bloody Assize, do then compare the two over some few pages, and reach finally the just conclusion that such a comparison is entirely futile. As Professor Housman's Greek chorus says after just such an exploit:

> Why should I mention Io? Why indeed?
> I have no notion why.

What remains as an actual account of the Tolpuddle martyrs is further diminished by the most outrageous padding, such as this:

> One can imagine how the matter soon became a topic of conversation at the local dinner parties and at the cattle-pens on market days. Such perplexity as there was: such blusterings, such denunciations! What speculations as to the immediate outcome of the labourers' action! What gloomy prognostications as to the future of the country and the speed with which it was going to the dogs!

There is no evidence that the authors have done any original research whatever upon their subject. There is not even any reason to believe that they have consulted George Loveless's own account of his sufferings, or read a first-hand account of the trial. As a piece of bookmaking, the publication is unworthy of notice. But as an example of a raid by one party upon what have been regarded as the treasures of another it is interesting in itself and deserving of exposure.

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Oswald Mosley and British Fascism. By JAMES DRENNAN. *Murray.* 7s. 6d.

Preparing for Power. By J. T. MURPHY. With a Preface by SIR STAFFORD CRIPPS. *Cape.* 6s.

As I finished the last pages of Mr. Drennan's clever and well-written book it took an effort to remember that the movement he is boosting has received the support of Lord Rothermere and that it is modelled on, and already shows signs of being an accurate copy of, foreign movements which have won their power by terrorism. Mr. Drennan, who speaks of the "anarchic piracy" of "the press-lord and the gangster," says nothing about Lord Rothermere, and does not refer to the sources of Fascist income or to the type of recruits hired to intimidate opponents. He leaves such inconvenient questions alone. After an historical summary which explains the origin of the "bourgeois mind," and supports the class-struggle theory of social evolution, Mr. Drennan gives a destructive account of the recent history of the Labour Party, and describes Sir Oswald Mosley's somewhat easily discouraged efforts to transform it; he then proceeds to outline a vague philosophy of Fascism, partly based on the work of Spengler, and ends by predicting the triumph of Fascism and the emergence of a new kind of superman who, one learns with some surprise, has been discovered by Sir Oswald Mosley himself as a result of a synthesis of Nietzchean and Christian doctrine. It is to be noticed that Mr. Murphy (an ex-member of the Communist Party who has returned to the Labour fold because he feels that Communism has become an ineffective sect outside the party, instead of a guiding force within it) analyses the Labour Party's role during recent years in a way which is substantially similar to that of Mr. Drennan, though he uses Marxian terminology which Mr. Drennan naturally avoids. Mr. Murphy and Mr. Drennan agree that the historical role of Fascism is to mobilise the small bourgeoisie, thereby exposing the weakness of Marxian analysis which has commonly assumed that by the time the present crisis had arrived we should have a small controlling capitalist class, a revolutionary proletariat and a comparatively negligible shop-keeping class. While admitting that Fascism is the expression of the revolt of the small property holder, Mr. Drennan, of course, urges that it is very much more. And he rightly points out that if Fascism were only the hiring of thugs by big capitalists it could never have conquered the State and captured the emotions of a people in the way that it has done in Italy and Germany. We discover as the book goes on that the secret of its success is that it gives expression to a widespread revolt against reason.

Mr. Drennan and Mr. Murphy and Sir Stafford Cripps, who contributes a useful introduction to Mr. Murphy's book, agree in believing that capitalism has reached a crisis in which orthodox Conservatism and reformist Liberal-Labourism are alike powerless to save themselves or anyone else. Mr. Murphy's hope lies in a revolutionary proletariat, and the most valuable part of his book is a first-hand account of the way in which the shop-stewards' movement was able, under war conditions, to force the pace in working-class policy. Mr. Drennan finds at the root of the matter a deep-seated *malaise* which has occurred whenever urban civilisation has divorced the mass of citizens from their roots in their crafts or on the land, and he attacks the "bourgeois mind" as bitterly as any revolutionary Socialist. He is obviously right when he argues that this mentality goes much deeper into the working classes than writers like Mr. Murphy would care to admit. And he bases his hope for the universal success of Fascism on the strength of national feeling which prevents the organisation of a successful revolutionary party on a purely class basis. He points out that one of the most powerful influences in producing Fascist nationalism is the hatred which the middle-class man feels against the dictatorship of international capitalism. Here again is a point which the Labour Movement has insufficiently appreciated. The cry against the bankers can be used for middle-class national propaganda as effectively as for Socialism. Other points to which Mr. Drennan refers incidentally are more obvious—the disillusion with party leaders and party politics, the boredom with conferences and the desire for action, the hatred of the old leaders by a younger generation—all this is familiar and well put.

Having brought us so far by argument and having denounced the capitalist system root and branch, we might expect Mr. Drennan to explain to us how the Corporate State will remedy the evils of a competitive system. Instead, he dashes off into an account of

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Spenglerism, an apostrophe to instinct and a series of quotations (in themselves able and cogent criticisms) from Sir Oswald Mosley's attacks on international capitalism. It becomes suddenly clear that the thing he and the Fascists most detest is reason, and that he does not enter into argument about the Corporate State because he wants at one and the same time to convince the capitalist that it will make property safe and the worker that his conditions would be better, not worse, under a system which would take away his freedom and reduce him to an even more abject poverty. No wonder, therefore, that he extols the man of action, explains that Fascism must be opportunist and need not work out its constructive programme, no wonder that he tells us in the same breath that the Fascist revolution must be both "fundamental" and "moderate"; no wonder that he argues, as Mr. Shaw has argued, that it is the forces of unreason which change the world. The bug that killed Archimedes was more powerful than Archimedes, therefore let us ally ourselves with the bugs in the certain hope of victory over science and civilisation.

KINGSLEY MARTIN

VERSE AND POETRY

The Medium of Poetry. By JAMES SUTHERLAND. *The Hogarth Press.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

The Making of Verse. By ROBERT SWANN AND FRANK SIDGWICK. *Sidgwick and Jackson.* 3*s.* 6*d.*

". . . Plato's account of inspiration makes no allowance for the fact that poetry has a medium of its own, and that this medium is not merely passive, but has some influence in shaping the poet's thoughts and feelings. It has *some* influence—I do not wish to overstate the case—." The moderation with which Mr. Sutherland introduces his case is at first admirable; later, as the reader becomes increasingly restive, it suggests the nature of the flaw. It must be difficult to write and argue if the possibility of overstatement is always a living danger. Admittedly rhythm and stanza, rhyme and words all present obstacles, opportunities or temptations to the poet as he sets about his work of expression. There are two ways of dividing an orange in half, however; according to the ode, you will lose nearly all the juice, according to the other, none of it. To consider the influence exerted by his medium as one studies the poetry of a particular man is from every point of view a valuable undertaking; from an examination of the effect of medium generally, with examples picked here and there, few facts of interest or importance emerge.

In the finished work of art, each technical factor is so inextricably connected both with the rest of the technique and with the poetic matter itself that to isolate one is almost inevitably to grasp the wrong end of the stick. Mr. Sutherland considers how important is the tune or rhythm which the poet has chosen, both in releasing and in carrying through the poem. The lines that set Wordsworth off on the actual writing of the *Idiot Boy* were:

> The cocks did crow to-whoo, to-whoo
> And the moon did shine so cold,

and he recorded also that "I never wrote anything with so much glee." Mr. Sutherland suggests that the couplet "may even have determined the poet's gleeful attitude to this theme." But surely it was rather because Wordsworth, that "happy child of earth," was feeling gleeful that this was the expression that seemed suitable to him.

Mr. Sutherland defends the poet who accepts ideas that are suggested to him by rhyme: "Are such ideas more fortuitous than those coming to him from many other sources?" Surely they are. Those that arise from association in his past experience are subordinated to the same colouring of the imagination as the original idea, but a rhyme will be suggested by sound and not at all by sense either poetic or literal.

The book of Messrs. Swann and Sidgwick opens with authoritative definitions, placed side by side on the page, of poetry and of verse. The authors have, then, chosen their title with care, and handle with competence a subject that has little affinity with the Protean one of Mr. Sutherland. As a schoolbook, this should accompany the student up the school, to be sipped from time to time rather than swallowed whole. Metre is always a difficult study, sweet neither in the mouth nor in the belly; the terminology is unfamiliar and complicated, and the variety in practical usage, infinite. The matter in the book, although clearly and often

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humorously put, with the advantage of different types to emphasise the varying importance of the remarks, is considerably compressed. Unless he be allowed time for inward digestion, even the attentive reader may, as the authors adumbrate, be reduced to boredom or despair, or, far worse, to loathing of anything that is written in verse form.

I find one minor statement that is questionable. That the Elizabethans called the heroic couplet "riding rhyme" from its use in the *Canterbury Tales* is improbable in the extreme; not only had the pronunciation of English undergone fundamental but unrecognised changes but—in spite of Speght's asseverations to the contrary—Chaucer as he appears in the black letter editions is unscannable. On the whole, however, the reader whose concern is chiefly with the occasional parts of the book can rely on more than one agreeable half-hour. The examples, ranging from Chaucer to A. P. Herbert, include so astonishing and engaging a couplet as the following. Nebuchadnezzar, when "turned out to grass"

> Spake as he champed the unaccustomed food,
> This may be wholesome, but it is not good.

Other welcome tit-bits include a fifteenth-century verse on the lion that is in form practically a limerick, and an official description of that Prologue that Quince wanted to be written in eight and six, Bottom in eight and eight. How many of us had noticed that neither had his way? And Mr. Sidgwick's free verse "Counsel on Original Verse Composition" is alone almost worth paying 3*s.* 6*d.* for.

E. B. STURGIS

BREAD AND BUTTER PUDDING

Death at Broadcasting House. By VAL GIELGUD and HOLT MARVELL. *Rich and Cowan.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Obelists En Route. By C. DALY KING. *Collins.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

Murder in Trinidad. By JOHN W. VANDERCOOK. *Heinemann.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

By Misadventure. By ALAN BROCK. *Ivor Nicholson and Watson.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

To modern detective story writers, at their wits' end to create variations on the murder theme, a peculiar locale for the crime or a fantastic *modus moriendi* must serve as substitutes for more profound originality. They are in a similar plight to that of the cross-word inventors, who have endlessly to think of more and more outlandish descriptions for the words "emu," "ore" and "Etna." It is not given to everyone to be a Torquemada or an Agatha Christie. Nevertheless, everyone seems to think they ought to be able to knock off a detective story, just by giving their minds to it. Messrs. Gielgud and Marvell have certainly given their minds to knocking off *Death at Broadcasting House*. They murder their victim at the microphone while he is acting a murder in a radio play—their original bright idea. They trot us round Broadcasting House in and out of the studios, showing us the "works," initiating us into broadcasting technique, and incidentally, it almost seems, providing us with a regulation number four of suspects. A fair sample of a detective is brought in, while a rather under-standard love interest is trundled about for a chapter or two. They work up their climax with that veteran of variety, a reconstruction of the crime at the microphone before the four suspects, while we are still supposed to be in the dark as to which has done the deed. And they have left just enough clues throughout to make the solution fair, but not obvious, to the reader. Mrs. Beeton provides the recipes, but the proof of puddings lies in the eating. *Death at Broadcasting House* is made of most wholesome Empire ingredients, but it is a dull pudding—like many of the other dishes on the broadcasting menu.

Mr. Daly King has previously published one book about "obelists," by whom he means persons "who harbour suspicion," i.e., presumably, detectives. This pretentiousness of nomenclature is a guide to the pretentiousness of *Obelists En Route* as a detective story. The bones of the plot are ordinary enough. The usual millionaire is found in a swimming pool, dead. Only, in this instance, the swimming pool is on a transcontinental train travelling from New York to San Francisco, containing, alas! four professional psychologists. And each psychologist professes a different psychology! The result is intolerably boring. None of the psychologists solves anything but the author's difficulty in padding out his book. They do not even solve the impossible psychology of the criminal—to enable us to swallow the motive for his crime. I am afraid Mr. Daly King himself must be obelised,

What cannot Art and Industry Perform
When Science plans the progress of their toil.
— Beattie.

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the correct meaning of which word is not "suspected" but marked with an obelisk as spurious, *vide The Oxford English Dictionary*. *Murder in Trinidad* is much more exciting, although not a thoroughbred detective story: there are too many swamps and mangroves and pirate lairs for the purist in these matters. The story concerns the unmasking of a gang of opium smugglers by a detective sent out from Geneva by the League of Nations. The ingredient of adventure outweighs all the rest, but the identity of the leader of the gang is well concealed until the end, and, for that reason, Mr. Vandercook can claim to have written a quasi-detective story. It is better to say nothing more of *By Misadventure* than that it does not claim to be detective fiction. *Malice Aforethought* was a brilliant description of a murderer preparing and executing his crime, and Mr. Brock attempts the same subject much less successfully. RALPH PARTRIDGE

BUDDHISM AND SUFISM

Islamic Sufism. By SIRDAR IKBAL ALI SHAH. *Rider*. 12*s*. 6*d*.

Indian Religion and Survival. By Mrs. RHYS DAVIDS. *Allen and Unwin*. 3*s*. 6*d*.

Islam has suffered at the hands of Westerners more than any other Asiatic religion. Only such of its tangible practices as polygamy, and its proselytising tendencies, have received any appreciable attention. But it deserves a more respectful study if for no other reason than that races of greatly differing cultures, and anthropologically wide apart, have found in it a faith from which they have seldom been converted. Apart from its admirable democratic and "communistic" teachings that cement the Islamic peoples together, Islam has always had a deeper and more metaphysical aspect. It is this aspect, known as Sufism, that Sirdar Ali Shah brings to the attention of Western students. *Sufi* according to the author is derived either from *Saf*, meaning a bench, hence one who sat on a bench (for purposes of meditation) or from that other word signifying purity. The *Sufi* generally receives his wisdom in flashes. Intuition is of more consequence to him than intellect. "Poets," the Sirdar says, "make the best Sufis, for poetry is the very essence of Sufism." As such it may be claimed, *Sufism* is the best in every religion and therefore this book might have been termed equally rightly Sufic Islam.

Mrs. Rhys Davids, who is a recognised authority on Buddhism, tries in her latest book to present Buddhism without tears. Buddhism would be more acceptable to the Western world but for such disheartening prospects as *Nirvana* and ceaseless survival within the ocean of *Samsara*. To the authoress as to other Westerners, the "panacea of excising the wish to be re-born" appears negative and at best curious. Utilising her great erudition on the subject she goes on to show that Buddha's original teaching was devoid of meanings and terms which were later added by over-zealous monks and commentators. Thus according to Mrs. Rhys Davids the Buddha did not extol renunciation to the extent he is credited with. "Not as house-man or as world-forsaker do I blame or praise a man, but according as he walks wrongly or rightly." "It is for thee by thy living to become God." And such ideas as *Nirvana*, "blotting out" a negation, and therefore repellant to the Western mind, and *Vatta*, "a futile aerial revolving," are, according to her, monkish interpretations. Neither has she any use for the popular theory of *Karma*. J. VIJAYA-TUNGA

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In spite of a superficial flippancy Mr. Tuohy, as he wanders over post-war Europe and observes its craziness, often gets amazingly close to the root of the trouble. Hence, what is clearly intended to be a series of popular pen-pictures of manners and customs on the Continent of 1933, continually becomes a shrewd indictment of the folly that believes prosperity and happiness to lie in a tariff-tight nationalism rotting on its own little midden, and peace to have permanence on a basis of fear, jealousy, envy, hatred and revenge. The peoples of the dissolved Hapsburg empire, trying to live side by side in boxed-in compartments; the swarming bands of hikers tramping over Central Europe as one way of escape from unendurable conditions at home; the cessation of joy in capitals that once prided themselves on their gaiety; the growing poverty of neutrals who grew rich during the war; the passing of free speech with the coming of dictators; all is crisply noted by Mr. Tuohy, amid a mass of swift gossip of people and places, and of the old Europe that vanished in August 1914.

A Tramp-Royal in Wild Australia: 1928-1929. By ARCHER RUSSELL. *Cape*. 10*s*. 6*d*.

Mr. Russell's title is a little misleading. He was neither tramp nor tramper. One day's walking was enough for him; the rest of his tour of some of the less attractive desert sections of Central Australia was accomplished on camel-back. He went at an unfortunate time, towards the end of an unprecedented four-years' drought, and he gives a quite vivid account of the inhospitable sandy country, barely populated by white men or natives, or even much else than insects, especially flies. The style is that of the American "travelogue" film commentator. "What a land! This surely was not of our days, not of this planet? We had somehow tumbled over the earth's edge and dropped to another world! . . . In going forward we were actually going backward—back into the haunts of Stone Age man, back into a land little changed since before the days of Adam." Almost every white man met is either "an intrepid bushman" or "a notable old prospector." Nevertheless, even though his descriptions of flora and fauna are, for a professed naturalist, extraordinarily vague, Mr. Russell does succeed in conveying something of the quality of these uncomfortable barren wastes.

Watching the World Go By. By WILLIS J. ABBOT. *Lane*. 12*s*. 6*d*.

It may be questioned if the famous American newspaper proprietors at whom Mr. Abbot gives us so many illuminating peeps, would approve the modesty of the title he has given to his story of a lifetime devoted to practical journalism. They probably believed they were making the world go round. Mr. Abbot, now an editor of *The Christian Science Monitor*, came into American journalism in the old stormy days, when to shoot at sight and shoot straight was often an editorial necessity and asset. Probably for English readers, to whom American politics, perhaps unfortunately, are hieroglyphics without a Rosetta Stone, the most attractive passages of a lively and most readable book are those in which Mr. Abbot gives us accounts of the distinguished men he has met or with whom he has worked; for he has the artist's eye for the salient feature, and whether his sitter be Lafcadio Hearn, the old Jefferson Davis asked to say a few words about the dying Grant, or such modern figures as Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, the man comes before us in an instant and in the round.

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Mr. Lucas, contemplating the eighty or so volumes listed opposite the title-page, may well have felt justification in adopting for once Beau Brummell's motto: "Let others do the work," and making a book of extracts from letters written to him by friends and others during the last thirty years. An admirable letter-writer himself, he is clearly the cause of admirable letter-writing in others, and if we get no more than we

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expect from Maurice Baring, Max Beerbohm, Belloc, Arnold Bennett, Galsworthy, Kipling, Christopher Morley, H. S. Salt, and some others, he does, however, discover gems no less rare in unexpected quarters. One of the very best (pp. 87–92) comes from "a total stranger," and there are others equally unsolicited and less justified but hardly less entertaining. There is real pathos in a note from Mrs. W. K. Clifford, and earlier on it is good to be reminded of the work of Mrs. Amanda McKittrick Ros. It is interesting to find the late Edgar Wallace having read *The Shropshire Lad* at a sitting and preparing to "read it now properly." Almost every page justifies itself, and if most of the work is done by the others, still, Mr. Lucas contributes his part in informative notes, as that wherein he declares that it was he who was responsible for the cutting and preparation, and also incidentally the title, of the much-questioned printed version of Oscar Wilde's *De Profundis*.

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

THE late Sir Edward Elgar was one of the few modern composers to be at all adequately represented on the gramophone. The recent recordings of the "Cockaigne" overture and the Prelude to "The Kingdom" are worthy successors to a series that already includes the two symphonies, the two concertos and "Falstaff" (though it is high time the Second Symphony was re-recorded). Most of these records have the unique advantage of the composer as conductor. Though not always a very polished conductor from the technical point of view, Elgar was undoubtedly the finest interpreter of his works. Where virtuoso conductors would underline the obvious and hold up the main flow for the sake of some pretty detail, Elgar would present his works in one unbroken sweep of line—virile, forceful and without sentimentality. He had, also, an uncanny power of getting that extra ounce of tone from the players, and an Elgarian tutti under the composer's direction had a quite unforgettable sonority. This sonority has been captured remarkably well on the H.M.V. records which establish a standard by which future performances of Elgar will be judged.

Elgar as a composer was far from being the convenient black and white symbol his denigrators have tried to establish. "Cockaigne," "Gerontius," the Rondo in the Second Symphony, the first movement of the 'Cello Concerto are facets of a character far too complex to be summed up in a type-formula. The two records in question represent, it is true, those sides of his genius which lend themselves to superficial praise and blame. "Cockaigne" is an epitome of the Edwardian optimism which seems so improbable to us at the moment, while "The Kingdom" has to a high degree the peculiar flavour of English catholicism expressing itself in art. "Cockaigne" in fact is an unconscious period piece and is as breezy and enjoyable as the unconscious period pieces of Chabrier. The B.B.C. Orchestra are at their best under the composer's direction and technically speaking these are the most satisfactory of all Elgar recordings (H.M.V. two 12in. DB1935–6).

The opening of the prelude to "The Kingdom" has a touch of that "nobilmente" eloquence which came rather too easily to Elgar, and were it not for the extreme brilliance of the orchestration the effect would be commonplace; but the three-four section which occupies the second side is one of his finest conceptions. "The Kingdom," like Elgar's other religious works, has often been compared to "Parsifal," but as Mr. Ernest Newman has very rightly pointed out, because a man has been influenced by another man's work it does not necessarily mean that his own work is derivative—it may be complementary. "The Kingdom" is not imitation "Parsifal"—it expresses with peculiar intensity a certain side of "Parsifal"—a side that is comparatively latent in Wagner.

The only flaw in the recording is a certain lack of bass on the second side. This is probably due to the fact that the composer has marked the bass pianissimo in a passage where the rest of the orchestra is marked mezzo-forte. In the concert hall these dynamics add a peculiarly subtle effect to the original harmonic scheme, but on the gramophone the effect is merely indecisive. The gramophone has at present little sense of aural perspective and at times is apt to get its perspective the wrong way round, like Uccello.

Otherwise the record is a fine one. (H.M.V. 1 12in., DB1934, the B.B.C. Orchestra under the composer).

The same lack of bass is the only fault in the otherwise excellent records of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony, made by the L.P.O. under Weingartner (Columbia 4 12in. in album, with the Prometheus overture on the last side, LX 274–7). Beethoven's underscored basses are difficult enough to hear in the concert hall, and

FIRST PRIZE

ALTRUISTIC. I would blow up the Albert Memorial at 2.30 on Derby Day. No one would be hurt, because, as it usually rains on that day, the steps and surrounding paths would be deserted. Rising in my own aeroplane, passing an astonished policeman, I should land on Epsom Downs and hurry to the paddock where:—

1. FOR MYSELF. With a hypodermic syringe I should drug all the horses except the outsider which I had previously backed for £2,000. Even if the drug were discovered after the race, my horse, being untouched, would be the only one not liable to disqualification.

2. FOR MYSELF. I should take up my position in the Royal Box, the best, and otherwise unobtainable, vantage point from where to watch my horse come home well in advance of the field. RUFUS.

SECOND PRIZE

The three things I should do if I were Mr. Wells's invisible man would be:—

1. A visit to Buckingham Palace just to see how "Royalty" really did pass away their lives.

2. I should walk into the offices of a certain weekly paper, and compare my attempt for the crossword puzzle with the correct solution.

3. Being an unemployed man I should walk into the Labour Dept. of one of the big firms, and write my name down on the register as the next that must be given a job. ARCHIE JAMES.

CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 62.—LUNATICS AT LARGE

For the United Asylums Rugby Football Cup, each team plays each of the others once. That team is the winner which scores the greatest number of *match points*, on the basis of two match points for a win and one match point for a tie.

This year the result was very odd. Goofy United won the cup, with a clear lead, as far as match points were concerned, over every other team. But, so far as *points scored in play* were concerned, Goofy United had an unimpressive record. They averaged only two points scored in play for each match in which they participated.

More curious still: taking the tournament as a whole, no two matches produced the same final score; while the total number of points scored in play was the smallest possible, having regard to the fact just mentioned. These data, according to the official scorer, are sufficient to enable the scores of the various matches played to be determined with certainty.

How many dropped goals, in all, did Goofy United register?

PROBLEM 60.—TETRAHEDRAL

Any one face of the octahedron may be covered by any of the four smaller tetrahedra.

Thus the number of *possible* arrangements is $4 \cdot 3 \cdot 2 \cdot 1 = 24$.

But of these arrangements only *one* will give a total of 10 on each face $(1 + 2 + 3 + 4)$.

Hence the required chance $= \frac{1}{24}$.

PROBLEM 59.—JUST AN AVERAGE PROBLEM

A set of Low's cartoons goes to:
O. Barraclough, Ravensdale, Regent Road, Bolton, Lancs.
There were nine correct and nineteen incorrect solutions. *Eight* points are awarded.

PROBLEM 37.—OVERTURE TO JUTLAND

Ten points are awarded to the following: A. J. L. Murray, R. A. Hamilton, A. J. Knowlden, J. Jones, H. M. H., R. D. Grieg, J. B. Channon, F. E. Maitland, F. Addison, J. A. Robins, J. I. Logan, "Macbeth," J. P. McEvoy, J. Stanley Gow, J. R. Whalley, F. C. Watts, G. T. Whiteman, A. G. Stripp, "Cooper," F. Aylmer, L. G. Roussin, R. Martin, E. T. Moore, W. Oldham, V. S. Butler, R. W. B. Clarke.

I have little hope of finding space in this column for a full discussion of the problem. It must await my next Problem Book.

PRIZES FOR PROBLEM SOLVERS

A set of Low's cartoons is awarded to the first sender of a correct solution.

In addition, a record is kept of correct solutions sent, and of the points scored weekly by solvers. On attaining 100 points, a solver is entitled to a prize, consisting of any book (or books) reviewed or advertised in these columns, of a value not greater than 10s. Solvers who have won a prize on this basis are eligible for a second prize on attaining a further 120 points, and for a third prize on attaining a further 150.

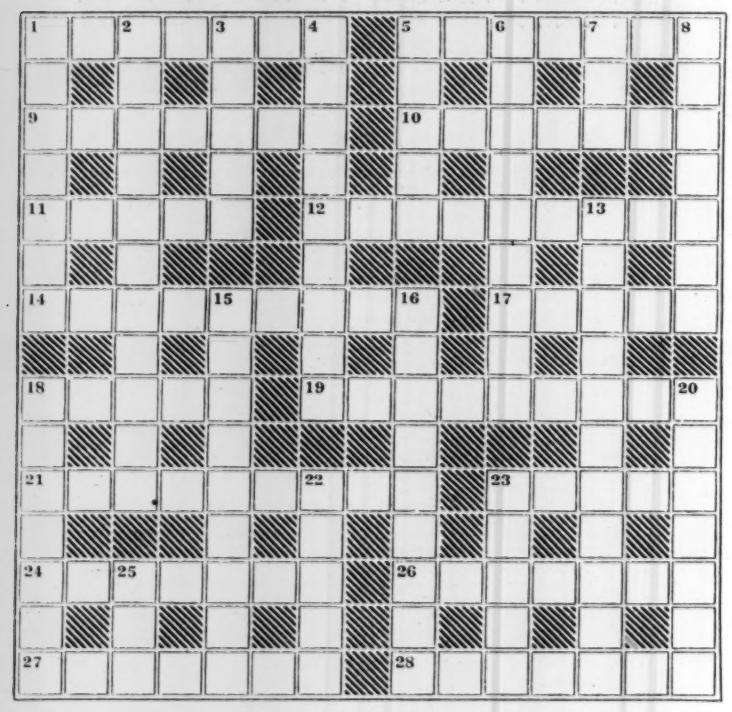
Solutions must be addressed to CALIBAN, c/o the Editor, and must reach this office not later than Tuesday week following publication of the problem. Solutions to two problems may be sent in one envelope; but on separate sheets of paper.

Some indication should be given of the method of solution.

CALIBAN

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 208

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Queen Street, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

LAST WEEK'S WINNER

The winner of last week's crossword is Mrs. Williamson, Drumgarth, Colinton, Midlothian.

ACROSS.
1. "The more I work the less my pay."
5. Not a poisonous adjective for a well-known soccer team.
9. A Kensington square in the North Country.
10. An ingredient for beer and the price.
11. Modern places of slaughter.
12. The final carriage draped in red.
14. Plain criterion.
17. A glance will show that he passed his life the wrong way.
18. Confound.
19. North African with a sunny complexion.
21. President Roosevelt's political system, no doubt.
23. Tory who enters into religious service.
24. "... kings might be espoused to more fame, But king nor peer to such a peerless dame."
26. My first is a bone-setter's head, my second the wealth of three English kings.
27. Content.
28. Place for an altar in London.

DOWN.
1. Spell.
2. Sportsmen might associate this with an Australian cricket ground, but men of letters with ballads.
3. Such persons might be said to be off the rails.
4. His namesake is a good fellow.
5. What Mr. Grimes badly needed.
6. Brer Tarrypin did his without the editor after winning the race.
7. See 25.
8. Where Iago arranged to meet Roderigo.
13. Nous, but change the language.
15. Teeth that bite a chain.
16. No doubt the hyaena's favourite picking.
18. Table equipment at sea.
20. Her date is like one end of a wireless set.
22. Place of confinement and the behaviour of the captives.
23. This conspirator sounds suitable for a horse.
25 & 7. Suspend the Shogun of Japan by his feet.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD
NOTE:—Elephant—*Twelfth Night*, III, 3.

S	T	A	T	U	S	Q	U	O	■	U	M	B	E	R
U	■	I	■	P	■	U	■	V	■	M	■	A	■	A
B	A	N	S	H	E	E	■	E	M	B	A	L	M	S
J	■	T	■	R	■	A	■	R	■	R	■	A	■	E
U	P	R	O	O	T	S	■	L	E	A	R	N	E	D
D	■	E	■	E	■	Y	■	A	■	G	■	C	■	■
I	N	E	S	S	E	■	I	N	T	E	R	E	S	T
C	■	■	■	■	■	E	■	D	■	■	■	■	■	U
E	L	E	P	H	A	N	T	■	T	H	E	N	A	R
■	■	N	■	O	■	T	■	L	■	A	■	E	■	N
L	U	C	K	N	O	W	■	O	S	P	R	E	Y	S
I	■	H	■	E	■	I	■	U	■	O	■	D	■	T
L	I	A	I	S	O	N	■	V	E	R	T	I	G	O
L	■	N	■	T	■	E	E	■	T	■	E	■	■	N
E	N	T	R	Y	■	D	A	R	K	H	O	R	S	E

on the records they behave like the Cheshire Cat. Low spots in the recording are the timpani roll before the recapitulation in the first movement and the timpani solo at the end of the second, while generally speaking the little canons and imitations in which the symphony abounds are too much top and not enough bottom. Against this must be set some lovely playing and recording, particularly of the splendid L.P.O. wood wind. This is one of the few works in which Beethoven wrote for the wind with Mozartean care, delighting in tone colour as such instead of using it as a handy hieroglyph. He wrote greater symphonies, but none so perfect. Weingartner's interpretation cannot be too highly praised, and one is grateful to Columbia for having chosen this fine artist in preference to one of the international ranters whose distortions of Beethoven only go down with the snob audience who rightly treat their concerts as a social rather than musical occasion.

Many people only get to know classical works through the gramophone, and the gramophone companies should show a sense of responsibility. We worry about the prestige of the white man among the coloured races, but the effect of Hollywood on the Hindu can be nothing to the effect of Furtwangler on the Far East (the principal market for classical records).

* * *

I am interested to see that Mr. "Spike" Hughes has taken to composing directly for the gramophone. That is to say, his recent records are not of previously popular dance hits, they are original compositions to be listened to as such.

Out of an interesting series issued by Decca, by far the best are "Arabesque" and "Donegal Cradle Song." "Arabesque" must be the first really obscure work in the jazz idiom. Extremely baffling at first, it is worth persevering with. (Decca, 1 10in. F. 3639. Spike Hughes and his Negro Orchestra. "Fanfare" on the other side).

"Donegal Cradle Song" is completely charming, and a proof of the flexibility of the jazz idiom when used intelligently. The best music Mr. Hughes has given us so far. It is amusing to notice that when in London he wrote a Harlem Symphony and that when in Harlem he returns nostalgically to his native country. (Decca, F. 3717 "Firebird" on other side).

Another jazz record well worth getting is Ellington's "Rude Interlude," a very good piece of harmonic sophistication, sombre in mood, with, on the other side, an apotheosis of the "till-ready" called "Dallas Doings." An excellent example of the two sid s of Ellington's talent. (H.M.V., 10in. B. 6449).

CONSTANT LAMBERT

Week-end Competitions

No. 207

Set by R. Ellis Roberts

In a recent book on Charles Lamb, the author states that "Charles Lamb was the Ordinary Man *in excelsis*," also that "he exactly conforms to the ordinary man's romantic idea of the Ordinary Man." Competitors are asked to comment on these judgments: (*a*) in an imaginary conversation between Wordsworth, Haydon, Keats, Coleridge and Blake—taking as a model the famous passage in Haydon's diary about Wordsworth, Lamb and The Collector of Stamps; or (*b*) to invent comments on the statement which might be made by any of the following—Dorothy Wordsworth, Mary Lamb, Coleridge, George Dyer, Thackeray or Charles Lamb himself. Entries should be not more than 400 words in length, but may be fragments from longer compositions. We offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best entries.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Queen St., W.C.2. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, March 9th.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The results of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

RESULT OF COMPETITION 205

Set by Clennell Wilkinson

If you could be Mr. Wells's invisible man, just for one short hour; and if you were allowed in that time to do only three things, one of them purely altruistic, and the other two for yourself (robbery being barred), what would you do? We offer a First Prize of One Guinea and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea for the best suggestion.

Report by Clennel Wilkinson

I regret to have to report that the answers to this competition were both few and weak—in fact, the worst I ever got.

No doubt it was a weak idea; but I cannot hold myself to blame for the fact that quite a large proportion of the competitors completely failed to appreciate the significance of the word "invisibility." One lady, for instance, begins: "I would change my sex." How would invisibility help her there? Another says: "I'd marry a Frenchman, they are such wonderful lovers." But why is it necessary that the Frenchman should be unable to see her? I am sure that she underrates her charms?

Men are equally off the point. "Redling," for instance, would use part of his hour of invisibility to call upon the Vicar and ask him what he is doing to stop unemployment. But couldn't he do that without becoming invisible? Isn't it just the sort of silly question that *visible* people are asking the poor man all the time?

Several competitors would use the occasion to invade Broadcasting House, push somebody away from the microphone, and broadcast instead a breathless message about slum clearance, or unemployment or merely an advertisement of one's own novel. William Bliss, with a livelier imagination, would stand unseen behind the official announcer and loudly correct his pronunciation when occasion arose. I like that.

Bruce Campbell and T. E. Casson had good ideas. The first thought he could intervene very effectively in a boxing contest, so as to secure the victory of the less favoured pugilist (on whom he had previously put his shirt). T. E. Casson would rush in, shivering but invisible, to kick decisive goals for Cup teams with his naked feet. I would recommend him for the prize if he had made any suggestion with a pretence to altruism.

But there was very little creative effort from anyone. On the whole, I think the first prize should go to Rufus and the second to Archie James. Their entries are printed overleaf.

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A list for the Connoisseur

Here is good news for the connoisseur, the first announcement of some new "His Master's Voice" recordings intended only for the discriminating musical public. These records will not be included in the general catalogue (although they are "His Master's Voice" and are sold at standard prices). They will be embodied later in a new edition of the Connoisseur's Catalogue, the special list of "His Master's Voice" recordings which includes hundreds of important works ranging over the whole field of music—vocal, orchestral, instrumental. Order from your dealer.

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MISCELLANEOUS—continued

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STORY-WRITING

There is always a big demand for good short stories, and many students of the London School of Journalism are making a useful spare-time income by writing stories for the magazines.

See Page 307.

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

LONDON TRANSPORT STOCKS—INVESTMENT TRUSTS TO BUY OR NOT TO BUY—RALEIGH CYCLE

THE address of Mr. Frank Pick at the London School of Economics this week must have horrified many holders of London Passenger Transport Board stocks. Mr. Pick is vice-chairman of the Board, but he pretended he was not speaking as a member of the Board but "rather irrelevantly and irresponsibly" for himself. The Board, he said, must place its financial affairs as soon as possible on a sound basis. This statement will shock those investors who bought their stocks on the assumption that the L.P.T. Board was "conservatively" financed. The holders of the "C" stock are particularly affected. The Board recently announced that no interim payment would be made on the "C" stock for the year ending June, 1934. The scheme for pooling receipts in the London Transport area with the four main line railways involves the preparation of somewhat elaborate statistics. A basic year (1932) is being analysed and all the adjustments to meet changes since that year are being explored. According to Mr. Pick, it appears that the Board will contribute about 72 per cent. of the gross traffics of the pool and the main line railways 28 per cent., but before the pool is divided up complicated allowances must be made for the varying operating expenses. What the "C" stock will eventually obtain it is quite impossible to estimate, but having regard to the fact that for the first two years substantial sums will have to be paid out in compensation to staff dismissed as a result of this rationalisation scheme, the market is now conservatively guessing 3 per cent. Probably no dividend decision will be made before September, but the "C" stock remains obstinately firm at 82½.

* * *

Mr. Pick went on to raise financial questions of fundamental importance for all public boards. The L.P.T. Board has a capitalist structure. The "A," "B," and "C" stocks correspond to debentures, preference and equity stocks with this difference—that the equity stock is limited to a maximum dividend of 6 per cent. Even this difference is more apparent than real, for the former transport companies, being public utility concerns, could never have paid dividends at high rates. This capitalist structure is unfortunately so designed as to handicap the Board in its future expansion. The Board is allowed to borrow, within certain limits, provided always that not more than one-third of the amount of its stock outstanding at any time is "A" stock and not less than one-third is "C" stock. This provision, said Mr. Pick, means that the Board cannot in effect raise any capital until the "C" stock has received such a return as to make its market value not far below parity. Otherwise, the raising of capital would be excessively expensive. Are Mr. Pick's remarks to be read as implying that the L.P.T. Board will endeavour to pay a higher rate of dividend on the "C" stock than would be financially justified—just to facilitate the raising of fresh capital at a reasonable rate? As long as London grows, its transport facilities must grow, and the L.P.T. Board will always be wanting fresh capital. Its semi-capitalist structure will therefore be a millstone round its neck. We are all in favour of allowing public corporations to stand on their own financial legs. Indeed, if losses are to be made we would prefer them to fall on a particular body of stockholders rather than on the general body of taxpayers. But it is obvious that the Treasury should give its guarantee to any fresh loan required by a public corporation if, without this Government backing, it would have to pay an extortionate rate of interest in the market or go without the loan altogether. The expansion of utility services must not be handicapped by absurd dividend requirements attaching to the semi-capitalist structures of semi-public corporations.

* * *

In a paragraph last September, we suggested that the then buying of investment trust common stocks was premature seeing that, while there was some improvement in the capital position, the revenues were still declining. This contrast is brought out in the reports of the leading investment trusts which are now being published. In some cases the decline in revenues is substantial and most dividends have been reduced. Nevertheless, on the assumption that investment trust income will now begin to rise, because increases in dividends on holdings of ordinary shares will more than offset the income losses from conversions and defaults on holdings of fixed-interest securities, we must reconsider our policy. First of all, the high-yielding preference stocks whose dividends were barely covered last year may safely be acquired when stock is on offer in the market. For example:

	Year Ended.	Times Pref. Divs. Covered (including all Prior Charges).	Assets Cover for Pref. Stock.	Price.	Yield %
English and Scottish 5% cum. pfd.	Jan. 1934	0.84	108.1%	85½	5.85
1929 Investment Trust 5% cum. pfd. ..	Mar. 1933	1.48	101.8%	95	5.26
Power Investment Corp. 5% cum. pfd. ..	Mar. 1933	1.18	41.2%	61	8.19

The weakest of these companies is Power Investment which, in the year to March, 1934, will probably not earn its preference dividends. Nevertheless, the market would be surprised if the dividends were not paid. The English and Scottish have suffered in the past through holding such a high proportion of ordinary shares as 52.7 per cent., but this factor should now begin to tell in their favour. The 1929 Investment Trust hopes to "come home" this year on its American investments, which accounted for 18.7 per cent. of its total portfolio, as on March 31st, 1933.

* * *

With regard to the ordinary stocks, it is annoying for the investor to pay substantial premiums over the break-up values. In America, it is possible to acquire the leading investment trusts at a discount on the break-up values. For example, Lehmann Corporation common shares of no par value can be purchased at $73, whereas the break-up value on February 1st was $89.63. In London one pays premiums of 100 per cent. upwards for the well-known trusts. We cannot claim that a purchase of these ordinary stocks is very attractive, particularly as there can be no quick recovery in investment trust income (on account of the wide distribution of holdings), even if the upturn has begun. The best that can be said in their favour is that the ordinary stock capitalisation is "high-geared"—the proportion of ordinary stock to total capitalisation in the case of the pre-war companies ranging from 20 per cent. to 30 per cent. Special arguments, however, can be advanced in favour of the following three stocks:

	Year Ending.	% of Ord. Stock to Total Capitalisation.	Break-up Value of Ord. Stock.	Price Ord. Stock.	Dividends %. Earned.	Dividends %. Paid.	Yield %.
British Assets ...	Jan. 1934	8.1	nil	250%	2.4	2.5	0.98
London and Lomond ...	Jan. 1934	23.3	148.1	110	7.9	4.0	3.63
London and New York	Oct. 1933	30.8	180.7	217	12.6	10.0	4.61

The "high-gearing" of the British Assets ensures a quick comeback for the ordinary stock on any recovery in America, as it is believed that the company's holdings of American securities are substantial. Its investment depreciation in January last was 22¼ per cent. London and Lomond, which was formed in January, 1931, has now wiped out its depreciation. London and New York actually had an appreciation last October. It will also be observed that London and Lomond ordinary stock is selling below its break-up value and London and New York at a premium of only 20 per cent.

* * *

In a paragraph two weeks ago on the Raleigh Cycle Holdings issue we did not intend to recommend any but the preference shares for investment. The issue was over-subscribed, but dealings opened at a discount because the City pundits frowned upon the issue. It is suggested that the "insiders" are unloading on the public because they are afraid of Japanese competition in the cycle trade. As the Japanese do not produce a machine which will survive the treatment meted out to a bicycle at our Universities or in our suburbs, we do not attach much importance to this threat. Nor was there evidence in the prospectus that the "insiders" were running away with a vast amount of cash. It was never suggested in the recent McDougall and Rank holdings' issues that the flour-milling business was unsafe because the insiders were unloading. Why, then, should the bicycle trade cause the City special alarm? Why should they be content to eat bread with Mr. Rank but refuse to ride a push-bike with Sir Harold Bowden? The City must either have access to information denied to the public or be guilty of absurd prejudice. We agree that the capitalisation of Raleigh Cycle Holdings is high and that the "equity" is dearly priced, but the participating preference shares on the published figures appear a reasonable investment at 21s.

COMPANY MEETING

SELFRIDGE & COMPANY

The Twenty-sixth Annual Ordinary General Meeting of the Company was held in London on Monday last. Mr. H. Gordon Selfridge (Chairman and Managing Director) said:—There has come to nearly everyone in business in England, during the last half of 1933, evident demonstration of generally improved conditions: in the manufacturing districts in the Midlands and elsewhere, in the country's exports, in the Budget surplus, in the daily and evident increase in numbers of transactions, and in the annual reports which have already appeared of distributive businesses both retail and wholesale.

Things seem to be definitely better and trade and commerce, through their own united efforts and without governmental or other aid, are proving that the so-called capitalistic system, as the world has known it for hundreds of years, can and will rebuild the structure of business which the terrible war and great governmental faults and errors have nearly destroyed. And we can see no other system, actual or theoretical, which can permanently accomplish this result.

Faults with the capitalistic system are faults of the individual and not of the system, and while it has become the fashion to decry the desirability of the system, we have seen none other described or proposed which can successfully take its place. Capitalism (perhaps an unfortunate word) encourages enterprise and, when properly exercised, rewards individual effort. The business men of Great Britain have proved themselves and their system quite capable of surviving the storm of depression.

We have served 567,000 more customers than during the record year of 1932—a pleasing demonstration of the continually growing popularity of this house. Our great stocks of merchandise have averaged somewhat more, but our number of times turned is only one-tenth of 1 per cent. less than last year. During the first six months our new building added to the monthly amount spent for expenses, but the autumn and winter months, however, showed an acceptable saving, and I may add that this saving was not made by any arbitrary dismissals, enforced holidays, or reductions in the pay of our staff.

The Chairman then dealt with various items in the balance sheet, saying that the profit, at £355,644, was better than last year by £14,085, and concluded: With the restrained optimism which the last six months would seem to encourage, we think we can look forward to the year of 1934 as one in which further and decided progress will be made. The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.

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